

Qualitative Changes in Ethno-linguistic Status: A Case Study of the Sorbs in Germany

by

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Ted Cichon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Cichon', with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

22 September 2004

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASR	Abteilung Staats-und Rechtsfragen (Central Committee Department responsible for Sorbian Affairs from 1957)
BKM	Federal Commissioner for Cultural Affairs and the Media
BRD	Bundes Republik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany)
c.	circa
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic (Union) Party)
CE	Council of Europe
CEI	Central European Initiative
CVP	Social Christian Party (in Belgium)
DB	Durchführungsbestimmung (regulation for the implementation of a law)
DBD	Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands (GDR Farmers' Party)
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republic (sometimes abbreviated as GDR, the German Democratic Republic, or the former East Germany)
DEFA	Deutsche Film AG (GDR national film company)
DM	Deutsch Mark
EBLUL	European Bureau of Lesser-Used Languages
ECHR	European Convention of Human Rights
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
ECRML	European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EU	European Union
e.V.	eingetragener Verein (Registered Association)
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
FCPNM	Framework Convention of the Protection of National Minorities
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth)

FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
FEL	Foundation of Endangered Languages
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HA	Hauptabteilung für Sorbenfragen (Department for Sorbian Affairs)
ICJ	International Court of Justice
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
KPP	Communist Party of Poland (Polish translation not available)
LDPD	Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (German translation not cited in original works)
MDR	Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (Central German Radio and Television Station for Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDPD	National Democratic Party of Germany (German translation not cited in original works)
NR	Łužiskoserbska Narodna Rada (Lusatian National Council)
NSDAP	Nationsozialistische Partei Deutschlands (National Socialist Party)
NW	Łužiskoserbski Narodny wuběrk (Lusatian National Committee)
ORB	Ostdeutscher Rundfunk Brandenburg (East German Broadcasting Station Brandenburg)
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
para.	paragraph
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Party of Democratic Socialism)
PRO	Public Records Office, Kew
PSC	Social Christian Party (in Belgium)
PZPR	Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers' Party)
RFE	Radio Free Europe

RMLs	Regional or Minority Languages
ROAD	Citizens Movement-Democratic Action Party (Polish translation not available)
SA SAD	Sturmabteilung der NSDAP (paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party) Sinti Alliance Germany
SAPMO –BArch	The Foundation for the Archives of the Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR under the Federal Archives of Germany.
SB	Serbske bildo (Sorbian Round Table)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Socialist Unity Party)
SKA	Sorbisches Kulturarchiv Bautzen (Sorbian Cultural Archive in Bautzen)
SLD	Polish Social Democracy Party (Polish translation not available)
SMAD	Sowjetische Militäradministration Deutschlands (Soviet Military Administration in Germany)
SND	Serbska narodna zhromadźizna (Sorbian National Assembly)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social Democratic Party)
SSF	Sydslesvigsk Forening (South Schleswig Association)
SSW	Südschleswigsche Wählerverband, (South Schleswig Voters' Association)
UG	Universal Grammar
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNCHR	United Nations Charter of Human Rights
US	United States (of America)
VLD	Flemish Vlaams Blok
ZPPK	Central Party Control Commission
ZSL	Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe (United Peasant Part

Dedication

To my parents.

A Note on Terminology and Referencing

Terminology

The use of the term ‘the Sorbs’ refers to the Sorbs of Upper and Lower Lusatia. Similarly, the term ‘Lusatians’ refers to the Sorbian Lusatians of Germany. In this study and elsewhere, the above terms, that is, Sorbs and Lusatians are used interchangeably, but refer to the Sorbs as a collective ethnic group. In addition, some of the available literature uses the term ‘Wends’, which also refers to the same group, but it is more accurate to use this term in reference to the Lower Lusatian Sorbs. It should also be noted that the adjective use of the term Sorbian in the Sorbian language is *serbske*, or *serbski*, depending on which grammatical case and gender is in use. There is no capitalisation of the adjective. The same rule applies in the German language (for instance, *deutsch*, *deutsche*, *deutscher*, *deutsches*) and some other languages. Every effort has been made in this dissertation to provide English translations or equivalents of non-English terms and expressions. However, there are instances where no translations are provided in the original cited works.

Although convention usually requires foreign words and names to be italicised, an exception has been made in this study regarding the name ‘Domowina’ (homeland). Rather, it follows the practice found in the English published works of Barker, and is consequently referred to as ‘the Domowina’.*

Referencing

According to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition[†], *Op. cit.* (*Opere citato* and *loc. cit.* (*loco citato*)) are falling into disuse. Hence, “Ibid.” is used in this study to refer to an entire reference (title of the work, author and other particulars) that is identical to the preceding material. Thus page number(s) are specified whenever the same source is cited, but is different when located at another page of the same source.

* See for instance Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany: The Sorbian Minority and the German State Since 1945*, (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000) and other published works by the same author.

[†] See *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed., (author not cited), (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 466 and 606.

Abstract

The progress of European history in the latter centuries witnessed the emergence of a number of state powers. Some of these states became colonial powers and remained so until the end of the twentieth-century's two World Wars. After the end of the Second World War, the world, but particularly Europe, became divided into two conflicting ideological spheres, East and West. Western Europe, particularly a divided and occupied Germany came under an Anglo-American influence on the one hand, while East Germany (GDR or DDR) and other Eastern Bloc countries came under the control of a communist Soviet Union. It is safe to say that there existed homogenising influences on both sides.

In broad terms, while borders were redefined and new states emerged, for the first time ever, a Slavonic minority group in the region of Lusatia known as the Sorbs saw the possibility of their fate being determined by fellow Slavs. Although the circumstances seemed to be favourable to claim a separate Sorbian state, the Sorbs found themselves under the control of the Marxist-Leninist GDR. However, on the surface at least, the Sorbs of Lusatia were constitutionally protected under this regime. In other words, they were protected under a nationalities policy, which claimed to protect and promote the Sorbian language and culture. Such measures raise certain questions concerning the ulterior motive for what would seem a reversal in attitude towards a previously considered inferior (racial) group. Was it a way of rehabilitating the past, or were the Sorbs used for ideological reasons during the years 1949 to 1989?

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989, German re-unification followed, which changed the political circumstances for the Germans and the Sorbs. This study examines the changes in the ethnic status of the Sorbs, which in turn changed the status of their language and culture. At the same time however, it is considered that it was among the first Slavonic *nations* to become a member of the European Union. Moreover, Europe instituted a number of measures to maintain its cultural diversity and heterogeneity, which includes ethnic or national minorities. By using a predominantly comparative approach to analyse the ethno-linguistic status of the Sorbs, past and present, this study incorporates a wide-ranging examination in the contexts of other minorities in Germany, federal and state constitutions, European law and global influences.

The study concludes that the ethno-linguistic status of the Sorbs has qualitatively changed from that of a more or less protected minority in Germany to that of just another European minority, subject to the same assimilatory pressures of globalisation, and therefore the same challenge of survival.

Volume 1

Introduction

The second half of the last century witnessed the formation of new states. In broad terms, the above events took place in the period between the disintegration of two empires, namely the British Empire and the former Soviet Union. In the former instance, the above phenomenon of disintegration took place in the wake of several colonies gaining their independence from Britain after the Second World War. In the latter instance, the demise of the Soviet Union also witnessed the creation of independent states. However, before the above events took place, there existed,¹ and still do exist, nations within states, and nations that are stateless.

Indeed, one could argue, discuss and analyse the theoretical and practical ramifications of these two concepts of 'state' and 'nation' as a separate investigation, say, in terms of political philosophy. Such a discourse has been rehearsed by scholars such as Hegel, in which the *State* is not merely a political community constructed by human practical reason, but also an ethnical entity which aims to achieve subjective freedom transcending the wishes of any single individual. Hegel's unpublished essay, *The German Constitution* (circa 1801) was the first attempt to define the state in the context of the impact of the French Revolution and the revolutionary French wars on the political system of Germany. Certainly, this is only a brief and a limited reference to Hegel's work, but it introduces the notion of a relationship between the citizenry of a given territory and the State, which has legitimate authority over the said territory and its citizens.

¹ Poland for instance, became an independent sovereign state in 1919. It was partitioned in 1772, 1793, 1795, and again in 1939. Yet, for all intents and purposes, it may be perceived and regarded as a nation before 1919, in spite of three partitions. In 1939, its partition is the partition of a sovereign state, a legal entity, notwithstanding a short period as a state.

At about the same period, Fichte in his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807) proclaimed that the German peoples have a culture, but no nation. For Fichte, 'universalism was embodied in the nation itself, where obvious inequities in the socio-economic domain were to be reconciled in the particular language and exemplary culture of the nation'.² Fichte above all defined the German nation by its language and will to assume a civilising mission.³ Thus, drawing upon these two writers, Hegel and Fichte, the concepts of state and nation are once more brought into a preliminary discussion here, which in turn generates a further investigation in to the composition of a nation, in this case, Germany. It is both useful (and coincidental), that the above-mentioned writers are German, particularly in the case of Fichte, because he is considered to expound the doctrine of Pan-Germanism and nationalism. Moreover he is considered to be, among other things, a precursor of National Socialism, a cosmopolitan, a socialist, a communist, 'and a thinker with a secure place in the Marxist-Leninist pantheon'.⁴

It should be apparent here, that it would be easy for one to be distracted and pursue a separate study of Fichte and his political philosophy. Therefore, in this introduction, he is merely a vehicle for conceptualising not only the idea of a 'nation' but also, the context of a 'German nation', which will instil from the beginning, an approach in this study that will utilise the perception of racial homogeneity and or racial purity as a backdrop throughout this investigation. In other words, the above is a pervasive phenomenon, which can be expressed in a nation's *collective psyche*. However, the

² "The 'Communist Manifesto and the problem of universality", (author not cited), <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_ml132/is_n2_v50/ai_20946433/pg_4>. Sighted 20 August 2004.

³ Hausheer, R., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Miller, D., Coleman, J., Connolly, W., Ryan, A., (eds.) (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1991), p. 154.

⁴ Ibid. p. 155.

above perception is not reserved to just a certain period of history, such as the Enlightenment or the Romantic Period; rather it is a continuum of such a perception.

Thus, it should be evident that the above-mentioned philosophers did not consider the existence of a nation within a nation. In other words, the ethnic composition of a state may not be homogenous. Furthermore, the state and or the nation may be composed of a majority ethnic group and a minority ethnic group. Put another way, the idea of a majoritarian ethnic population and a minority ethnic group co-existing within the same territorial boundaries can be examined in terms of a dominant political paradigm and its subordinate ethnic minority.

In order that one can conduct an analysis of an ethnic minority group, such as the Sorbs of Lusatia, which is the central topic of this study, one should note da Costa's assertion that 'it is impossible to understand the history of the powerless without the history of the powerful'.⁵ In brief, this study will primarily focus on the parallel evolution of the German State, the powerful entity here and the evolution of the powerless Sorbian minority. However, it is not within the scope of this thesis, nor is it necessary to reiterate a comprehensive account of Germany's history. Rather, whilst referring to the German State in general terms, a sharper focus will remain with the two principal areas, which although in a contemporary context, are the *Länder* (states) of Brandenburg and Saxony, it is also safe to consider them as not only 'states' but also as part of the conceptual or theoretical framework of the German State as a dominant paradigm. For this reason, throughout this thesis, the use of 'the State'

⁵ Costa, da, E.V., cited by Marx, A.W., "Contested Citizenship: The Dynamics of Racial Identity and Social Movements", in *Citizenship, Identity and Social History*, Tilly, C., (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 162.

specifically refers to the Federal Republic of Germany since 1989. 'The State' also refers to the time of the German Democratic Republic. Thus for present purposes, the primary methodological approach to this study is to investigate the ethnic position or status of the Sorbs as a *case history* in the wider context of ethnic politics. The methodology used in this study will receive further discussion below.

However, such a study that is proposed here cannot be undertaken in isolation. In other words, it is not an exclusive examination of the German State and its Sorbian minority. Certainly, it is fair to say that the Sorbs of Lusatia are a microcosm in relation to a majoritarian German population, which constitutes the German State, but, as it will become apparent in the course of this study the German State finds itself as a microcosm in the context of a global environment. In other words, phenomena at a macro level, such as regionalism, Europeanisation, commercialisation, globalisation and technological advancement, to name but few, place the Germans and the Sorbians in the context of a competitive global environment that can influence outcomes such as their ethno-linguistic status.

Thus in brief terms, all of the above-mentioned phenomena are influences that are a part of a subtle on-going struggle between homogenisation and heterogenisation. It is a clash between the values of diversity and conformity. Moreover, the above can be further distilled to present one with the struggle of maintaining an ethnic identity. An essential part of maintaining an ethnic identity includes the notion of language and cultural maintenance and promotion. The above raises the question as to whether the

Sorbs as one of 210 “nations” without states are ‘endangered species like some of our plants and animals, and, if so, should they be protected and preserved?’⁶

As Minahan claims, the evolution of the many stateless nations that are now emerging in the post-Cold War world order, ‘represent a perplexing diversity of national groups that share just one characteristic: they identify themselves as separate nations’.⁷ Interestingly, despite the economic hardships following German re-unification, and the rise of intolerance to “foreigners”, including the Sorbs in some quarters, ‘have [sic] fuelled the national movement, which now focuses on formalizing their position as the first Slav nation in the European Union.’⁸

Be that as it may, in order to be fair and present a holistic analysis of the ethno-linguistic status of the Sorbs to date, one is compelled to trace their origins, history and the evolution of the Sorbian identity. This in turn reinforces the need to adopt a case study approach in the following investigation or thesis. At the same time however, and as noted already in the above, the broader context of a regional focus also includes the historical antagonism between Slavonic and German groups. This in turn may be useful to reach a further understanding of the *powerful's* collective psyche, which includes its policies of conquest, colonisation, and assimilation or, perhaps simply, *Realpolitik*.

⁶ Doob, L.W., in Minahan, J., *Nations Without States*, (Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. xiv.

⁷ Minahan, J., *Nations Without States*, op.cit., p. xv.

⁸ Ibid. p. 336.

Methodology

As mentioned above, in attempting to establish or assess the changes in the Sorbs' ethno-linguistic status, a case study approach is just one method that will be used in this investigation. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to determine as accurately as possible, the origins of the Sorbian people. The Sorbs, as a Slavonic group, together with the other Slavonic groups present the scholar with a significant challenge in terms of trying to establish their origins. This challenge may be further complicated by the fact that in the case of the Sorbs, who are also called Lusatians or Wends, speak two dialects: Upper Sorbian, resembling Czech, and Lower Sorbian, which in its spoken form is closer to Polish. In any event, for the present purposes of this study, it should be sufficient to state that the Sorbs of Upper and Lower Lusatia are the last remaining members of the Slavonic tribes, the *Milceni* and *Luzici*, which established settlements westwards in the area up to the River Elbe and beyond.

In spite of the array of names, which have been used to describe this Slavonic tribe known as the Sorbs, their identification as an ethnic group, nonetheless, warrants a comparative analysis. The use of a comparative analysis is not dictated by the use of a case study approach alone. It should become apparent in the course of this study, that throughout the history of the dominant German group and its relationship with the Sorbs, comparisons are inevitable.

A number of comparisons can be made within the closed parameters of the Sorbs as a case study, without having to compare the same phenomenon under examination, with other ethnic groups. For instance, if one were to consider that the New Testament was published in 1548 and the Lutheran Catechism in 1574 in the Sorbian language, then

this data informs one of the roles of the Church or religion concerning the Sorbs in the sixteenth-century, although the data in itself may be limited. In simple terms, it informs the reader of the role of the Church or religion in the maintenance of the Sorbian language. If one considers the above noted ecclesiastical role in say, the nineteenth or twentieth-centuries, or in the present day, such as say church services being spoken in the Sorbian language, then not only is it possible to make historical comparisons, but it can be regarded as a case study of the role of the Church and the maintenance of the Sorbian language. In brief, a case study such as that illustrated in the above has comparative merit.⁹

In a similar way, it is almost inevitable to employ a comparative method in this case study of the Sorbs, if one draws attention to language and nationalities policy during the time of the former Marxist-Leninist East German regime, and the re-united German State after 1989. Indeed, it is also a comparative analysis of different German regimes at different points over time. Furthermore, a comparative method in this study is useful in order to establish whether other national minorities in Germany reap the same benefits of government policy towards minorities in a contemporary context.

At the same time however, as the title of this study suggests, it is an enquiry into the 'qualitative changes in the ethno-linguistic status' of the Sorbs, hence the study attempts to establish the main factors, which contribute to this change. In order to test a hypothesis concerning 'change', it is useful to establish how an ethnic (Sorbian) population, or a nation within a nation identifies itself. Thus, this study employs a qualitative survey, which it must be stressed here, is not a representative sample of the

⁹ See Mackie, T., and Marsh, D., (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995), p. 177.

Sorbian population, but at the same time it seems to coincide with Hemminga's quantitative analysis.¹⁰

The thesis is divided into six substantive chapters. Chapter One defines the key terms that are integral to this study, such as: race, ethnicity, language, nation, state, nation-state, minority groups, nationalism, ethnocentrism, identity and culture. Although the above definitions have been well established elsewhere, they can still be misunderstood, or distorted to suit a political agenda. For instance, the term *race* can refer to be people who are the descendants of a common ancestor; a family, tribe, people, or nation, believed or presumed to belong to a particular lineage, but at the same time migration, colonisation and intermarriage can change the racial makeup of an ethnic group or population. Yet it almost seems to be a human preoccupation to differentiate and categorise the human family. Moreover, history has witnessed the above categorisation to follow not only differences in physical traits, but also to allocate humans into superior and inferior divisions. Interestingly language can no longer be used as a marker to identify a particular race. In brief, the purpose of Chapter One is to achieve logical coherence in these key terms and avoid inconsistencies and vagueness. Definitions that are specifically associated with the study of language will be discussed in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Two, one attempts to establish the origins of the Sorbs. It also attempts to present an outline of their history to the present day. The chapter does not aim to give

¹⁰ See Hemminga, P., "The Sorbian language education in Germany", in *Mercator-Education, Regional Dossiers Series*, <<http://www.21.brinkster.com/lusatia/files/docs/0004en.htm>>. Sighted 24 September 2003.

In brief, Hemminga's study of attendance in Sorbian classes in Lusatia by pupils reflects a similar pattern identified in the author's field studies.

a complete history, as this is beyond the scope of this study. Rather, the aim is to firstly locate the territory that has been the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs, which has evolved over time to present one with the notion of a nation, which in turn has certain political 'properties'. In other words, in this study a historical survey examines whether an ethnic group (if it constitutes a nation) is autonomous, subordinate or part of a greater state. Put another way, such an investigation explores the relationship between a subordinate group or an ethnic minority such as the Sorbs, and its host state, Germany. Some of the distinguishing features of such a relationship include specific policies towards a national minority, which may involve assimilation, discrimination, or at an extreme point, extermination.

As already noted above, racial categorisation can manifest itself under the rubric of 'superior' and 'inferior' perceptions, hence this study presents further interest in that the above classification has been witnessed in Germano-Slavonic antagonism throughout history.

The purpose of directing the historical focus of Germany mainly at the Free State of Saxony and Brandenburg in Chapter two is already noted in the above, but it is paralleled by the history of the Sorbs. The period of particular interest is the period of the GDR. Not only is it significant in terms of the GDR government and its nationalities policy towards the Sorbs, but it also raises a number of questions at a macro level of politics. For instance, it may appear at first as a reversal of position or attitude in terms of the historical experience of Germano-Slavonic antagonisms, which have included violent conflict during the course of Central and Eastern European history. Another question revolves around the notion of rehabilitating

Germany in the wake of the Holocaust of World War II. Does this help explain a reversal in the German people's psyche in their treatment of a population of the Slavonic Sorbs? How and why, a group previously considered as *Untermensch* (subhuman), in 1949 has its minority and language rights encoded into a (GDR) constitution? This in turn leads to the question, what was the real purpose of the GDR's policy towards the Sorbs? Was it an exercise in internationalist Marxism or an effort to smother a collective shame? ¹¹ According to Meyer-Gosau, a divided post-war Germany addressed its Nazi legacy differently in the West and East states.¹² In brief, West Germany experienced a collective shame and guilt, whilst East Germany together with an undercurrent of denial, referred to its efforts in governance as *antifascismus*, that is, the communist ideal fighting against fascism. But, the latter raises another question, that is, what were the effects on the German national identity? These questions cannot be ignored, and this study will attempt to provide some explanations.

Thus, it will become apparent that Sorbian affairs are inadvertently intertwined with the political changes implemented by the East German State's single party, the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei* (SED or Socialist Unity Party). Conversely, SED policy measures such as those executed in education and energy resources, to name but two portfolios, are found to have profound effects on Sorbian cultural and linguistic maintenance. At a micro level of ethnic politics, the Sorbs' cultural umbrella organisation, the Domowina[†], seems to be in an adversarial position in its relationship

¹¹ Fulbrook, M., *German National Identity after the Holocaust*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999), particularly pp. 142-178.

¹² See Meyer-Gosau, F., "Outing to *Jurassic Park*: "Germany" in Post –Wall Literature. An Essay against Tiredness" in *Contentious Memories: Looking Back at the GDR*, Hermand, J., and Silberman, M., (eds.), (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1998).

[†] The 'Domowina' is not italicised in this dissertation. See Note on 'Terminology and Referencing', p. xxii.

with SED bureaucracy. In brief, key communist officials appear to be paternalistic in their administration of Sorbian affairs. The events of 1989 changed the political circumstances of the German and Sorbs once again.

Chapter Three defines language, and its associated terms. The term 'language' is often taken for granted. Unless an individual is in some way physically or psychologically impaired, it can be said that it is taken for granted and that the spoken language is just a part of human development. The study of language and linguistics is well rehearsed in depth elsewhere, thus the aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of some of the concepts associated with the above study. Concepts such as, sociolinguistics, the origins of language; sub-fields of linguistics such as, language acquisition, language competence, linguistic anthropology, linguistic psychology, linguistic geography and linguistic map, are just some of the concepts that contribute to an understanding and conceptualisation of a language that belongs to, or is spoken by an ethnic group. The language of an ethnic group is an intrinsic part of that group's collective psyche, to 'declare' a traditional territory that it inhabits and regard it as their nation.

Certainly, the above discussion points towards a political orientation, but as Fishman in his use of the term 'speech community' is able to point out that language as a carrier of content, is also

... a referent for *loyalties* and *animosities*, and indicator of social *statuses* and personal relationships, a marker of situations and topics as well as the societal goals and the large-scale *value-laden arenas of interaction* that typify every speech community.¹³ (Emphases added).

¹³ Fishman, J.A., *Sociolinguistics: A Brief Introduction*, (Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, 1970), p.1.

In brief, Fishman's assertion succinctly describes the position of the Sorbs in terms of their struggle for language maintenance. The issues of loyalties and animosities are perhaps more easily recognisable whenever there is a recorded history. But the issue of language status or its decline in a speech community, such as the Sorbs may be more insidious.

Chomsky, for instance, argues that the 'behavioural sciences have commonly insisted upon certain methodological restrictions', which neglect how language 'plays an essential role in thinking and human interaction'.¹⁴ In brief, Chomsky argues that language, or linguistics is a part of cognitive psychology that helps to shape and explain human behaviour.¹⁵ Certainly, the above assertion is a minute portion of a body of work, but it does provoke one to examine and explore the dynamics of the knowledge of a language, particularly if it is the mother tongue. Moreover, it is the relationship between the speakers of a particular language and their identity, territory or a homeland, that help explain as to why they may have a determination to survive as a nation. In simple terms, it is a case of an ethnic group, which would declare, "We are Sorbians". The fact that they are also German citizens, simply adds to a robust enquiry.

Conquest and colonisation are just two phenomena that are often referred to as causes for a decline of an autochthonous language. Inter-marriage between two racial or ethnic groups and resettlement of the indigenous group are among other phenomena that will affect the distribution of native speakers. The same phenomena noted above,

¹⁴ Chomsky, N., *Language and Mind*, (New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1968, 1972), p.ix.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 1-3.

although perhaps in a more sophisticated form, have resonance in a contemporary context. In brief, the autochthonous language of ethnic minorities is threatened by influences such as English as a global language, commerce, technology and an increased ease in human movement regionally and globally.

Hence, it may be appropriate at this point to emphasise some of the difficulties in approaching this study in a sequential order. In other words, it may be reasonable to argue that such a study should begin with the first chapter identifying the Sorbs, and then a chapter defining language and its associated concepts, followed by an analysis of the terms that have a political perspective. Similarly, it is reasonable to suggest that issues such as the displacement of traditional Sorbian villages due to lignite mining before and after German re-unification belong to the historical survey of the Sorbians, rather than an examination of the legal implications that arise as a result of the above activity, which was a part of the East German energy policy. The point is that, throughout this study, the themes and topics under discussion overlap, and thus they are linked to each other in varying degrees.

In any event, to return to main focus of this introduction, the above raises another question in terms of the relationship between a language and a nation, particularly when there are clear signs of the language becoming extinct. Thus, it would seem that in the event of language death, then there no longer exists a nation that is clearly and ethnically distinguished by its language and culture, when there are no more speakers of that language. Once again, the tension between homogeneity and heterogeneity should become apparent, particularly when they have outcomes such as those noted in

the above. At the same time, it also includes an examination of political arrangements that espouse *tolerance*, and the tolerance of *difference*.

The quotation by Hitler, which introduces Chapter Four, is not just restricted to the ideology and events of Germany's Nazi period, from 1933 to 1945. It compels one to examine some intellectual discourse in the century or so before Hitler's time. The ideology and phenomenon referred to as nationalism manifested itself in literary and political thought during the Romantic Period. It is a forerunner to the cataclysmic events of the twentieth-century.

However, it is not within the scope of the chapter to provide an extensive examination of nationalism, but rather, elucidate the significance of the Romantic Period in the way it is linked with nation building and the formation of a national identity. In turn, the investigation in this chapter attempts to identify a *national collective psyche* that may characterise a nation's contemporary political behaviour, especially in the way it behaves towards an ethnic national minority, such as the Sorbs in Germany. Thus, it is useful to examine the idea of a nation in the context of a dominant power, such as Germany, and the concept of a nation in the Sorbian experience. Certainly, the two ethno-political paradigms will share some common themes, such as the nation as an imagined social/geographical space that a distinctive group inhabits. However, Hage points out, 'it is imagined as a national will, the will of a unified national body (the national territory and its inhabitants)... protecting and defending it'.¹⁶

¹⁶ Hage, G., *Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society*, (Annandale (NSW): Pluto Press, 2003), p. 33.

Furthermore, the Romantic Period not only provides a nationalist imagination, but also intimation of gender in the imagination of a fatherland, motherland and *Heimat* (homeland). It is important to note here that the Sorbs, as a people, have in their collective psyche, a homeland, (the) Domowina, which is also the namesake of their peak organisation, formed in 1912.

As aforementioned, the Romantic Period highlights the importance of the national language in the literature of the time. In other words, the language of the Germans, Sorbs, Poles and Czechs crystallises their respective sense of a national identity. It is also an opportunity to compare the different perspectives in German-Slavonic (here it refers to just the Sorbs, Poles and Czechs) political thought, sentiments and emotions that are expressed in German and Slavonic Romantic literature and music.

Having laid the foundations of what could be loosely termed as German-Slavonic (Sorbian) relations, the chapter attempts to assess the former East Germany's policy towards the Sorbs. It needs to be noted here, that the study in this section of the chapter (and elsewhere) is indebted to Barker's work in *Slavs in Germany: The Sorbian Minority and the German State Since 1945*.¹⁷ Although Stone's 1974 study titled *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*¹⁸ is also a valuable source, it is fair to say that Barker's work includes the more recent developments up until German re-unification and the outcomes for the Sorbs thereafter. In brief, by this stage the Sorbs have experienced and survived a number of changes in the German political order. That is, post World War I defeat of Germany, a lost opportunity to

¹⁷ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany: The Sorbian Minority and the German State Since 1945*, (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1974).

gain autonomy in 1919; the defeat of one totalitarian regime replaced by another totalitarian regime, followed by a liberal-democratic regime, the Federal Republic of Germany.

In Chapter Five, more concepts are introduced because, as the above suggests, a liberal-democratic political arrangement presents this study with the notions of a civil society. To state the obvious, the political landscape of Germany changed dramatically in the post-war years in that a constitution (Basic Law) was imposed on the German people, which were to form the State known as West Germany. In a sense, the political values of the West Germany's liberal democracy were continued, and extended to include the GDR as a part of German re-unification. Thus, under such an arrangement, a civil society would be expected to maintain the tenets of a pluralistic and multicultural society, which in turn it is expected to be tolerant of diversity as well as be a just and an *inclusive* society.

Thus, it is necessary in this chapter to define terms such as, among others, pluralism, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. As will become apparent, the debate over the homogeneity and heterogeneity of a society intensifies. At the same time however, if it is assumed that modern day Germany embraces cultural diversity among its inhabitants, then it asks the question of how the values are implemented and protected (but more so in Part III). Moreover, it should also become apparent that this study is not restricted to a bi-lateral (Germany and the Sorbs) analysis. Rather, it seems that one of the advantages of a comparative approach in this study's analysis, demands a comparative method in order to establish or assess Germany's implementation of its national minorities policy towards the Danish-speaking minority of Schleswig-

Holstein, which incidentally is approximately the same size as the Sorbian minority in Lusatia. Therefore Part I of Chapter Five focuses on the theoretical aspects already noted in the above. Part II examines the historical background of the Danish-speaking minority in Schleswig-Holstein, and then makes a comparison between them and the Sorbian minority. The same theoretical tools are used as those in the Sorbian study, that is, the political relationship between the dominant and majoritarian German ethnic group, and the Danish-speaking minority. In brief, it surveys factors such as financial support for this minority group, constitutional provisions, and access to the media, contact and dialogue with the centre government, representation and education.

All the above are facets of cultural and language maintenance and promotion. Conversely, the European community has in place a number of legal instruments, which are meant to ensure that states that have ratified certain conventions concerning the protection of national minorities' rights and languages, meet their obligations by effectively implementing minorities policies, as they are codified in the respective Conventions and Charters (see below).

In order to gain a comprehensive overview and an evaluation of Germany's policy towards its national minorities, Part II includes a study of the Frisian minority, and the Roma.¹⁹ A discussion on the immigrant population in Germany is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the diversity and number of other ethnic groups that makes up

¹⁹ Some of the literature and documents concerning the Roma also include the Sinti group. For the purposes of this study, it is worthwhile to note that the term Sinti refers to the Roma in Germany, but Roma can also refer to all the Roma peoples in Europe. It should also be noted that contemporary literature retains the nomenclature of Roma/Sinti.

the total size of the immigrant population in Germany cannot be ignored.²⁰ Hence, there is only a brief reference to the above group in this chapter. “Germany will always be an immigrant country”, as Wolff²¹ asserts, provides an insight into the direction of future German policy on immigrants.

Part III of this Chapter assesses Germany’s minorities policies, by referring to the main criteria by which the Council of Europe stipulates as evidence of signatory states implementing the legal instruments, as noted above. For present purposes, this chapter illustrates some interesting comparisons between the Danish-speaking minority and the Sorbs, such as differences in political representation, and access to the media respectively, to name but two.

The main legal instruments that will be the subject of this study are the Council of Europe’s Articles of the *Framework Convention of the Protection of National Minorities* (hereafter FCPNM) and the *European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages* (hereafter ECRML). It is interesting that the above are derivatives of the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, as well as the *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* of the European Union. As it happens, there seems to be a common normative narrative that pervades the above noted legal instruments (or European as well as International Law) in national legislation, and interestingly, this normative theme resonates among the various organisations that exist, in order to promote the ideals of rights and language maintenance. This discussion will be taken

²⁰ For statistical details of the various ethnic groups in Germany see *World Directory of Minorities*, (author not cited), edited by Minority Rights Group, (London: Minority Rights Group International, 1997), p. 150.

²¹ Interview with Professor Stefan Wolff at the European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg, 29 July 2003. See also Rau, J., (now retired German President), in *Reden und Interviews* (Speeches and Interviews), Martin, G., (ed.), Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Federal Government Press and Information Office), Berlin, July 2002.

up in further detail in Chapter Six. Another sub-theme that arises here is the relationship between the supra-national law of the European institutions and national legislation.

Once again, it should be noted that there is a significant overlap between the various theoretical and pragmatic spheres in the latter chapters. Thus the problem of maintaining a viable and coherent sequence in discussing the relevant issues recurs. In any event, a brief analysis of the effectiveness of the proscribed legal instruments, particularly within the European context embellishes an assessment that concerns the potential of maintaining the Sorbian language and culture.

Thus, Chapter Five is also a prelude to the next chapter in one important way. It introduces European and International law, and proceeds to assess the effectiveness of the various Conventions and Treaties concerning Germany's other minorities, apart from the Sorbs. Chapter Five sets the parameters of establishing any patterns in the implementation of minorities policy towards the Frisian and Roma. In other words, the study of at least three minority groups in Germany in this chapter equips one with the tools to examine the Sorbian minority's experience in the context of law, among other influences and factors concerning this Slavonic minority.

Finally, Chapter Six continues with an examination of two broad categories. Part I examines 'the physical environment' that the Sorbs of Lusatia find themselves in a re-unified Germany since 1989. By this, it refers to the Sorbian institutions, the key political parties in Germany, the absence of a Sorbian political party and the adjustments that needed to be made to the respective *Bund* (federal) and *Länder*

(states, specifically the Free State of Saxony and Brandenburg) constitutions. It is not necessary to enumerate the entire contents of Part I, but it is sufficient to say that issues such as the lignite mining in Horno have remained before both regimes, that is before and after 1989. But, an interesting dimension to this issue is that the Sorbs pursued their objectives through legal and constitution channels, including the Brandenburg and European Courts.

Among the other aspects of the ‘physical environment’, this part of Chapter Six also discusses the influence of the English language on the German and Sorbian languages. (Again is it difficult to separate for sequential purposes as to whether English as a global language should be in Part II (see below), or be regarded as part of the social environment in Germany). An important matter for consideration is Sorbian education in Lusatia. It is necessary here to establish the level of participation in Sorbian classes/schools at all levels of education. At the same time Germany’s policy towards Sorbian education, to name just one aspect of its national minorities policy is under scrutiny in this chapter.

Part II takes the aspect of English as an influence one step further in a brief discussion concerning the English language and its connection with popular culture. In brief, this can be partly related to some of the trends in Sorbian youth and its low participation in Sorbian education.

The main focus in Part II concerns the advocates and agencies which support the Sorbs. These include a number of European non-government organisations, and among the advocates, Part II also examines the connections between the Sorbs and

their Slavonic neighbours, Poland and the Czech Republic. Agencies such as the Federal Union of European Nationalities (hereafter FUEN), and the European Centre for Minority Issues (hereafter (ECMI), are the two major organisations that observe, monitor, document and promote the rights and culture of all ethnic minorities in Europe. *Mercator* is another organisation that has the functions of informing, researching, documenting and legislating minority linguistic rights. The European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL) has similar functions. This chapter will attempt to identify and analyse the factors or influences that undermine the maintenance of the Sorbian language and culture, and surveys the factors, which support the Sorbs of Lusatia. In brief, besides evaluating the changes in the ethno-linguistic status of the Sorbs in Germany, it aims to provide a prognosis.

Finally, some comments on the use of appendices in this study. They serve two functions. One is to provide supplementary data such as numerical, empirical, or, qualitative perspectives. For instance, one of the useful aspects of this research includes discussions and interviews with Sorbian scholars and laypersons, who give some valuable insights into the historical, political and cultural aspects of the Sorbs during the former Marxist-Leninist regime in East Germany, as well as contemporary and ongoing issues. Often, this information is not cited in the available literature. Hence, rather than rely too heavily on several published works, field research and qualitative analysis enables one to present a different contribution to the field of Slavonic studies.

As noted previously, some of the data in this study is acquired from survey research, which in turn will have numerical values. The study does not claim to be a

representation of *all* the Sorbs. However, it lays the foundations for a better understanding, test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, and to develop methods to be employed in any subsequent study'.²² In brief, it provides a “snapshot” of the Sorbian community, a method which is also used by the National Library of Australia. The same survey was conducted in Schleswig-Holstein to provide a comparative analysis between the Danish-speaking minority and the Sorbs of Lusatia.

The other function is to augment the debate of this thesis. Thus, theoretical perspectives are employed to supplement a certain point or concept. In some instances, certain material may seem to belong to a particular chapter, but as already mentioned in the above, every effort is made to provide a coherent continuum. The Official Documents that are reproduced, particularly in Appendix 3 is extensive, because there is an emphasis on the legal aspects concerning minorities in Chapters Five and Six. Incomplete citations of the relevant legislation would compromise the salience of the study, particularly where the legislation specifies the obligations of the member States. Moreover, in spite of any shortcomings in terms of efficacy, the various legislation in place, be it the Council of Europe, or a local government, not only do they serve to protect national minorities, but the existence of such legislation plays an important role in upholding the tenets of democracy and civil society.

From an antipodean perspective one may be forgiven for being oblivious to the existence of such a small group as the Slavonic Sorbs. It may come as a surprise that a number of Europeans, including Germans, are not aware of the Sorbs, let alone ‘the

²² Babbie, E., *The Basics of Social Research*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1998), p. 72.

first Slavonic nation to be a member of the European Union'. No matter how small this ethnic minority who identify themselves as Sorbs may be, a case study such as the following is not limited to merely a bi-lateral approach. It is a multi-faceted study. It engages in a plethora of themes, concepts, and phenomena, empirical and theoretical perspectives, which belong to the rubric or study of ethnic politics.

It finally concludes that the ethno-linguistic status of the Sorbs has qualitatively changed from that of a more or less protected German minority to that of just one of many European minorities, subject to exactly the same assimilatory pressures of globalisation, and therefore the same challenge to survive.

Chapter 1

*Purity of race does not exist. Europe is a continent of energetic mongrels.*¹

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to define and discuss the fundamental concepts that are central to this study. In the course of the chapter it will become apparent that not only defining these terms can be problematic, but there are also a number of issues related to each definition. These issues are not only controversies concerning theoretical or definitional disagreements. Rather, the definitions themselves allude to political conflicts between communities, between one racial group and another, both past and present.

In view of the fact that the subject of this thesis has a Germano-Slavonic or more specifically, a German-Sorbian focus, it will become apparent that references and illustrations that are made in the context of this study are also set within a European context. Certainly, there is no exclusivity intended here as the theoretical bases established in this chapter have ramifications and relevance to political and social processes or phenomena across all societies. But to begin with, this study will include a definition of *race*.

The term race is very broad and vague. It can refer to a comparative small group of people, or to a magnitude, such as the 'Asian race', which within the confines of say, a state such as the People's Republic of China, is the most populous in the world. The confusion instantly becomes apparent. Does one consider the Chinese people as a

¹ Fisher, H.A.L., cited in *The Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations*, Jay, A. , (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 137.

race, or as a part of a broader racial entity? At the same time, the notion of a Slavonic race is far from satisfactory in understanding, which group or groups of people constitutes the Slavonic people.

In a contemporary context, the Slavonic people may include national/ethnic identities such as the Russians, Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs (including Serbs, Croatians), Slovaks, Slovenians, and Ukrainians, to mention a few. But, this in turn prompts the question, whether these respective groupings imply a homogenous or a heterogenous composition in their populations. Similarly, this kind of analytical approach may be used in an examination of other continents racial identities and popular composition. In brief, it can be argued that the term, or the identification marker Chinese, is as vague, ambiguous or imprecise as Slavonic. The same assertion could be applied to the term African, American, or even Australian.

Interestingly, what is now referred to as a *diaspora*, (in brief, a dispersal of communities over the world) is not a new or recent phenomenon. Archaeological and anthropological investigations, both past and present conclusively demonstrate this point. Therefore, a study of anthropological evidence is necessary in this investigation to determine and thereby answer the question, what is the meaning of the term 'race'. However, both the methodology and evidence presented by way of an anthropological approach may have wider implications. In other words, scientific or biological explanations of race have raised debate, if not controversy about these approaches. (See below).

Moreover, this study requires one to distinguish whether the terms *race* and *ethnicity* also mean that there is homogeneity within a 'Slavonic race'. In other words, are there different ethnic or racial entities, or are they of the same ethnic or racial composition? Or, by using the terms synonymously, interchangeably, does it mean that there are differences constructed intra-regionally, by the notion of a border or boundary? In brief, the notion of a territory, prompts the question of how do the inhabitants of a territory identify themselves within the context of a say, a state. Put another way, one needs to ask: what is the *modus operandi* in which these inhabitants distinguish themselves from other communities?

Thus, most of this chapter will rely heavily on already established theoretical frameworks located in encyclopaedic and other standard works. Moreover one will need to rely on the studies made by theorists such as Erikson, Fishman, Strauss, Denison, Pitchford and Robertson, to name but few. Finally, the anthropological evidence presented by Lundman provides a convincing insight into a scientific method of classifying 'the races and peoples of Europe'² for present purposes, but at the same time, it may provide an understanding for the origins of racism. Lundman's work is further supplemented in this chapter by a brief historical survey of the perceptions of indigenous populations, experienced by Europeans during a period known as the Enlightenment.

² Lundman, B. J., *The Races and Peoples of Europe*, (New York: The International Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics, Inc., (IAAEE), 1977). Translated from the German by Donald A. Swan.

1.1 Defining the term race

Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language,³ defines the term race as

1a: GENERATION b: the act of breeding or producing offspring c: a breeding stock of animals 2 a: the descendants of a common ancestor: a family, tribe, people, or a nation belonging to the same stock b: a class or kind of individuals with common characteristics, interests, appearance, or habits as if derived from a common ancestor<the Jewish race> 3 : any infraspecific taxonomic groups: as a : MICROSPECIES b : SUBSPECIES c: a permanent or fixed variety d: BREED e: PHYSIOLOGIC RACE f: a division of mankind possessing traits that are transmissible by descent and sufficient to characterize it as a distinct human type <Caucasian ~> <Mongolian ~> 4: inherited temperament or disposition.

syn RACE, NATION, and PEOPLE, even though in technical use they are commonly differentiated, are often used popularly and interchangeably to designate one of a number of great divisions of mankind, each made up of an aggregate of persons who are thought of, or think of themselves, as comprising a distinct unit. RACE is anthropological and ethnological in force, usually implying a distinct physical type with certain unchanging characteristics, as a particular color of skin or shape of skull. In popular use RACE can apply to any more or less clearly defined group thought of as a unit usu(ally) because of a common or presumed common past. accidental; it can be made and unmade; but a nation is something real which can neither made nor destroyed – J.R.Green> and often not clearly distinguishable from RACE in comprising any large group crossing national boundaries and with something significantly in common <the children of the world are one nation>. PEOPLE, sometimes interchangeable with NATION though stressing a cultural or social rather than a national unity, can apply to a body of persons, as a whole or as individuals, who show a consciousness of solidarity or common characteristics not wholly comprised by RACE or NATION, suggesting a common culture or common interests or ideals and a sense of kinship.⁴

A number of interesting points arise from the above definition. Firstly, it is a general overview, but also a comprehensive presentation for even the casual reader. It also introduces a number of other concepts such as nation, people and it gives one a

³ See Babcock, P., Editor in Chief and the Merriam-Webster Editorial Staff, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, (Cologne: Könnemann, 1993), p. 1870.

⁴ Ibid. The above is transcribed as it appears in the original text/citation.

political consideration, which is not premature, but inevitable in such an analysis. In brief, they demonstrate the interchange ability of the terms, which can lead to ambiguity, error and controversy. For present purposes it is sufficient to introduce these terms, but they will receive further discussion below. However, what is of note here is and is also emphasised by the definition, is the assertion of a state as 'accidental'; it can be made or unmade and that, a new government, which, for certain purposes, would make the people of several states one people.

It is in the latter instance, which alludes to one of the hallmarks of contemporary politics in post war Germany. In brief, it is an issue that will pervade and also be cultivated throughout this thesis, because the existence of the Sorbian people (and not to mention the Turkish minority), in a sense challenges any notions of homogeneity especially within the German state, which in turn allows for scrutiny of a definition of the term race.

Another definition of the term race can be found in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*.⁵ It is defined as,

A biologically distinctive human group [sic]. The concept has figured large in European thinking until recently, but most anthropologists today consider it to be of little scientific value. Biological differences result from the isolation of one breeding population, but there have been few isolated human groups in recent millennia. In the past 500 years, with the growth of imperialism, slavery, and European colonization, contacts between all human groups have been intensive; gene pools are in constant flux; and the biological differences between populations are slight. The familiar racial classifications typically emphasize superficially obvious features, such as skin colour or hair type, but other genetically transmitted features, such as blood

⁵ See Crystal, D., (ed.) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 998.

groupings, or differences in inherited enzyme deficiencies, which are more precisely measurable, tend to cross-cut [sic] the classical categories. Moreover, genetic dispositions and environment interact to produce local physical type; for example, there are clear correlations between body proportions and climatic variations.⁶

Earlier generations of scholars assumed that biological races could be demarcated, and that racial groups would vary not only in skin colour, skull shape and so on, but also in intelligence and even in personality. Despite many attempts to establish such correlations, there seems to be no evidence that biological differences between populations have any relationship to variations in ability or character or with any cultural institutions.⁷

Thus, so far one can identify some consistent markers in the present definition of race. In brief, it is a categorisation of groups of people along biological and genetically transmissible features that gives them a consciousness of common interests, racial membership and, as well as that of an identity. The concept of identity will be discussed later. It is interesting to note that the author here attributes to the historical survey of European behaviour through the centuries. Whether it is through slavery or colonisation, these phenomena are manifestations of earlier mass migration, and popular movement. These policies alone, whether they were commercial or state sponsored, would introduce heterogeneity of humans in a population over time. For instance, a legacy of the slavery experienced in the United States illustrates how a Negroid race changed from that of an African origin to varied genetic dispositions

⁶ Ibid. "Ibid." is used in place of 'loc.cit.', that is, the material cited remains at p. 998. See 'Note on Terminology and Referencing' p.xxii.

⁷ Ibid.

among current populations of black, coloured, and white Americans today.⁸ A more contemporary illustration, and a short hand here, is often a euphemism for globalisation. Nonetheless, these processes in human history were and still are, governed by political agendas. It can be said however, that the significance of territory has been assigned a minimal focus in these two definitions thus far. This relationship between a territory / homeland and a racial group will be discussed below. Thus, a sociological explanation may be useful here.

1.1.1 Categorisation of Races

According to Pitchford in *The Encyclopedia of Sociology*,⁹ who claims that the assignment of individuals to racial categories profoundly affects the quality and even the length of their lives. Despite the obliqueness of such an introductory comment Pitchford explains that

These assignments are ostensibly made on the basis of biological criteria, such as skin colour, hair texture, and facial features. Yet, the biological meaning of race is so unclear that many social and natural scientists argue that race, as a biological phenomenon, does not exist.¹⁰

Pitchford continues by reinforcing this study's argument in the above that,

Others take the position that while race differences exist; extensive interbreeding in many societies has produced large numbers of these people to racial categories depends on social, rather than on biological criteria. Thus the social consequences

⁸ Similar themes and concepts arise in the European experience, but this study later examines the ramifications of multicultural societies, such as their impact on the heterogeneity on a given population.

⁹ Pitchford, S.R., in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Borgatta, E.F., and Montgomery, R.J.V., (eds.), (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2000), Volume 4 in 5 volumes, p. 2329.

¹⁰ Ibid.

of biologically inherited traits are the fundamental issue of the sociological study of race.¹¹

1.1.2 Race and ethnicity

The terms race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably and there has been much conceptual confusion about the two terms, but social scientists assert them distinct meanings. As Pitchford points out in her discussion of biological conceptions of race,

Scholars differ on the precise definition of ethnicity, but these definitions usually include some or all of the following criteria. First ethnic groups are extended kinship groups, although kinship may be loosely defined, as based on a common homeland rather than common ancestry.¹²

It has been well documented in the available literature, how co-ethnics share a distinctive culture, marked by differences ranging from language, religion, architecture, rituals, style of dress or cuisine. On this point it may be warranted to further illustrate some culinary nuances experienced in Europe. Certain dishes are variations on a common theme or a major ingredient that is used, and thus have become shared by ethnicities such as the Poles and other Slavs, Germans, Greeks, and some variations of this dish exist in the Middle East.¹³ In the former instance, the category of a Caucasian race would usually apply. Similarly, the matter of dress can symbolise ethnicity or nationality, especially when the dress is considered a national costume. For instance, the attire found in Bavaria will differ from the Pole who comes from the Carpathian Mountains (known as a *góral*), who will in turn differ in dress from an individual who comes from Kraków, which is in Silesia, which is next to the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ A meat dish named Rolladen in German, is also eaten in Poland (rolady) together with potato dumplings (Kloßen) and kluski, in their respective countries. Also, another dish commonly known as 'cabbage rolls', not only exists in Central and Eastern Europe, but also in the Middle East and Mediterranean, although in different presentations. Interestingly, each country claims ownership to the above as its own traditional dish.

mountainous (*górzysty* in Polish) region in Poland. The point is, that ethnic markers such as dress or costumes can vary within one nation and differ from other nationalities, but in this instance, the above in terms of race classification, remains Caucasian.

Cultural differences such as those noted in the above further add to the notion that sociologists do not believe that the biological notion of race has any relevance to the study of human society. Rather, as Abercrombie, Hill and Turner point out, many sociologists prefer race relations or ethnic relations, as the description of their field of inquiry.¹⁴ The sociology of race relations comprises the following issues

(1)[t]he study of racist ideologies which suggest that social inequality between ethnic groups is caused by genetic endowment; (2) the analysis of the structures which support racism and racist ideologies; (3) the study of interaction between social class and ethnicity in social stratification; (4) the historical inquiry into the origins of race and racism, with special reference to colonialism and anti-colonialism; (5) the study of the location of ethnic groups within the labour market; (6) the contribution of these social, historical and cultural factors to the contemporary inequality between ethnic communities within industrialised society.¹⁵

Once again, the literature informs one that in general, sociologists have rejected the notion that human groups can be unambiguously defined in terms of their genetic constitution.¹⁶ Furthermore, social groups are more commonly defined by reference to shared culture such as language, customs and institutions.¹⁷ Of these, and for

¹⁴ Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., and Turner, B.S., *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1984), p. 406.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 406-407.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 150.

¹⁷ Robertson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1993), p. 169.

present purposes, language becomes a central issue when identifying ethnic markers. The sociology of language will be discussed later in this chapter.

Returning to the specific task of defining ethnicity, Robertson claims that it refers to a sometimes complex combination of racial, cultural and historical characteristics by which societies are occasionally divided into separate, and probably hostile, political families.¹⁸ In its most simple form, ethnicity cannot be exemplified as a racial group distinguished by characteristics such as skin colour alone. A more refined way to explain the concept of ethnicity may be by referring to ethnic politics, where for example, Irish or Scottish nationalists feel ethnically separated from the English rulers, as they may see it, of their lands.¹⁹ As Robertson points out, almost anything can be used to set up ethnic divisions, though, after skin colour, the two most common, by far, are religion and language.²⁰ Remaining within the English sphere, the ethnic division in the latter instance is primarily highlighted by the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Certainly, the issue of language plays a part, especially where Catholic nationalists romanticise about the lost Gaelic language throughout the island of Ireland.

In any event, it can be said, that few societies are ethnically homogeneous, even when they proclaim themselves to be. Moreover, there is not complete agreement on how the term ethnicity should be defined. For instance, Alba makes the point that in the past, it was common to highlight cultural difference as an essential feature of ethnic

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

distinctiveness.²¹ An approach attributed to Barth, focuses on the existence of a recognised social boundary.²² However, one of the most useful definitions is that of Max Weber, whereby he defines an ethnic group is one whose members

... entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration. It does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.²³

It remains however, that there is controversy over whether race should be viewed as a form of ethnicity. One is reminded that in this context, race should not be understood as a bundle of genetically determined traits that of themselves generate social differences, but as a kind of social classification used by members of society.²⁴ Thus, it should become apparent, that a vast majority of sociologists repudiate the biological thesis as one of social classification. At the same time, many scholars distinguish between ethnicity and race. For instance, Berghe defines race as a social classification based on putative physical traits and ethnicity as a classification based on cultural ones.²⁵ The contrast between the two is explained further by Alba, and it is a useful analysis that warrants the following citation. Thus, according to Alba

The contrast between the two can also be formulated in terms of volition versus external constraint, with racial categories seen as more imposed by outsiders and ethnic ones as more claimed by group members themselves. But equally commonly, race is seen as a variant of ethnicity: A racial group is, then, an ethnic group whose members are believed, by others if not also by themselves, to be physiologically distinctive. Not only do racial groups typically have the characteristics of ethnic groups (for example cultural distinctiveness), but many

²¹ Alba, R.D., in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Borgatta, E.F., and Montgomery, R.J.V., (eds.), Volume 2, op.cit. p. 841.

²² Barth, F., cited in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Volume 2, op. cit. p. 841.

²³ Weber, M., cited in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Volume 2, op. cit. p. 841

²⁴ Berghe, P., cited in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Volume 2, op.cit p. 841.

²⁵ Ibid.

seemingly non-racial ethnic groups may also be believed to possess some distinctive features (for example the olive skin tones of Italians).²⁶

Other examples of variations of skin tones can be found in Germany. For instance, natives of Schwabia, a region in the southern part of the province Baden-Württemberg, also have a darker or olive skin complexion. But, it should be borne in mind, that the distinction between the two groups is not hard and fast. In other words, the above observations are further underlined by the historical transmutation of some racial groups into non-racial ones.

Thus, the historical impact on the contemporary ethnic relations of any society is significant and is potentially central to any discussion of ethnicity. This theme will be developed throughout the course of this thesis. Furthermore, the above point introduces another distinction, which is also central to our hypothesis. That is, it pertains to the mode of entry of a group into a society. In brief, this point can be described in terms of a situation just after contact between an indigenous group and one migrating into an area.²⁷ One possibility is that the migrant group dominates through conquest. The contact between indigenes and European settlers in Australia and the United States, are but two illustrations. The Australian and American experiences both exemplify, that incorporation into a society can be through force or through more or less voluntary migration. A group's mode of entry is fateful for its trajectory of development in a society.²⁸ Therefore in this inquiry thus far, it indicates that a theoretical foundation of ethnicity will enable a later analysis of the Sorbians

²⁶ Alba, R.D., in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Borgatta, E.F., and Montgomery, R.J.V., (eds.), Volume 2, op.cit. p. 841.

²⁷ Ibid. Lieberman, S., cited in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Borgatta, E.F., and Montgomery, R.J.V., (eds.), Volume 2, op.cit. p. 841.

²⁸ Ibid.

(or the Wends), in the context of an ethnic minority group being incorporated with a society, which is now known as a unified Germany.

In other words, this inquiry will also focus on the issue whether there is a difference between a group (in this case the Sorbs), which claims ethnic distinctiveness and one, which has distinctiveness, imposed upon it by some politically superior group (that is the former dictates of a Marxist-Leninist state, and later in the context of the Federal Republic of Germany). In more precise terms, the latter refers to the period after reunification in 1989. Nevertheless, the concept of ethnicity may become the basis either for national separatism or for political subordination. Furthermore, the ambiguity of the definition of an ethnic group may also reflect the political struggles in society around exclusive and inclusive group membership.

1.1.3 Biological conceptions of race

As noted above, the study of race and race relations often refers to assertions made on the basis of biological criteria. Therefore, in this study, it is essential that these biological conceptions of race be investigated in some detail. Moreover, there has been a brief reference made to a historical perspective in such a study. Thus, to begin with, it can be said that rapid and long-distance migration brought different racial groups together that was accelerated by trade and the large-scale European exploration and colonial expansion of the sixteenth and through to the nineteenth centuries. As Pitchford notes, as Europeans became aware of peoples who differed

from them in culture and appearance, the concept of race entered the 'popular and scientific vocabulary as a means of classifying previously unknown groups'.²⁹

Moreover, scientists during the nineteenth-and early-twentieth centuries attempted to sort these groups in a hierarchy. For instance, Darwin's theory of evolution, which maintains that species in their struggle for existence leads to a condition in which only the fittest will survive. This theory gained widespread acceptance by early social theorists such as Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner, suggesting that different social groups, including races, were at different stages of evolution.³⁰ Furthermore, it was proposed that the more advanced groups were destined to dominate groups less fit.³¹ This idea, also known as *social Darwinism*, but not supported by Darwin himself, became a justification for European domination and America's treatment of its racial minorities.³²

One of the distinctions that scientists attempted to make on the basis that some races were at a more advanced stage of evolution than others was to measure differences between the races, notably in the area of intelligence. Binet and Simon developed the first intelligence test in 1905. As Pitchford points out, approximately one million American soldiers in World War I were administered a modified version of this test and the results were used to argue that there were large, genetically determined differences in intelligence between blacks and whites.³³ However, it is important to note that apart from other unreliable aspects in the testing, it is generally accepted that

²⁹ Pitchford, S.R., in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Volume 4 op.cit. , p. 2329.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. p. 2330.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

environmental factors, and cultural bias against members of certain class, ethnic, and racial groups of such tests can account for any apparent racial differences.

By the same token, Pitchford does specify that while the average scores of blacks have tended to fall below the average scores of whites, greater variation occurs within each group than between the two groups: that is many blacks outscore whites.³⁴

1.2 An anthropological approach and the classification of races

At this point it may be useful to refer to a more specific study of race groups using anthropological findings. Some physical anthropologists have narrowed the concept of race into three main race groups: the Negroid, Caucasoid (or Europid), and Mongoloid, or black, white, and Asian races. The following study belongs to the work of Lundman, whose focus is predominantly a European one, and describes the above groups by claiming

[E]urope was and is up to our time the dwelling place of the bulk of the White or Europid race and for most of its pronounced subraces. To the south the region of the predominantly Europid race extends approximately to the northern border of the Sudan savannah. East of the Nile River, however, the racial boundary is very indistinct. In Asia Europid races fill up all of the southwest Asia and predominate also in the north of western India — becoming rarer about the northern Deccan region and around the lower Ganges region.

East and north of these areas begins the predominance of the Mongolid races. The Mongolids dominate also in the steppes of southeastern most Russia to the lower reaches of the Volga River and up toward the Ural mountains [sic]. From here on the racial boundary is likely to pass between the still predominantly Europid Volga Finns and the predominantly Mongolid Voguls, Ostiaks, and Samoyeds. It then reaches the European Arctic Ocean somewhat south of the Pechora river [sic].

³⁴ Ibid.

Herewith we have delineated the predominant Europid region of the Old World. Within this region are found only a few small non-Europid enclaves. One of these is the tiny predominantly Mongolid Pussta region of Hungary — and also the region north of the Azov Sea in the Ukraine. There are in addition a few no less interesting smaller predominantly Negrid regions in the Sahara, and now also in the Atlas mountain region of Morocco.³⁵

Certainly, the above citation is not a complete survey of racial groups, but there is a sense that the racial classifications noted above correlate to certain geographical regions. For present purposes, perhaps what may be more important is not only an anthropological perspective, but to continue with biological differentiations associated with races. In other words, Lundman's work returns to the familiar trait, that is, pigmentation, which includes skin, hair and eye colour. To begin with, Lundman's study is rather broad, but sufficient for present purposes. He claims that

The difference between these Europid races in Europe and other races of the world is among other traits in the skin. The difference is, however, more in the nature of the skin and less in its color. Skin color varies among different national groups in Europe from rosy-white to rather dark-brown. The latter color is already somewhat darker than among some of the so-called colored races. In addition, there are millions of much darker-skinned, but clearly Europid, people in India and also South Arabia. The thick- and dense-skinned yellow and red race shows no strong change in skin color in its vast and varied range of distribution. The Negro has become more or less black in skin color. But among the Europids pigmentation has been extensively adapted to the existing milieu. The six zones range from light-mixed hair and light eyes in England, Scandinavia, northern Germany and Poland, the Baltic States, and northwest Russia to dark hair and dark eyes in Portugal, south Spain, south Italy and Greece.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid. Lundman, B.J., *The Races and Peoples of Europe*, op. cit., pp.1-2.

³⁶ Ibid.

Lundman's study also examines other racial traits such as stature and cephalic index, or breath-length index. In brief, there are five zones in Europe ranging from an adult male mean of 160 centimetres and under to a mean of 172 centimetres and over.³⁷

Using Lundman's the cephalic index is a measure of head form, which is written as

$$\text{Cephalic Index (C.I.)} = \frac{\text{Breadth of Head}}{\text{Length of Head}} \times 100.$$

In brief, the Cephalic Index includes the measure of three categories: round-headed (bradycephalic), medium-headed (mesocephalic) and long-headed (dolichocephalic).³⁹ Lundman further maintains that in the case of this anthropological trait, significant regional differences exist. For instance, dolichocephalic or long-headed peoples are located in northwestern Europe (Scandinavia and the British Isles), and in southwest Europe (Iberia, southern Italy, and the west Mediterranean islands).⁴⁰ In comparison, bradycephalic or round-headed people are found across a wide zone in Europe, ranging from the Bay of Biscay across the French central plateau region, the western Alps, northern Italy, up to Yugoslavia, then northwards over the western Carpathians to Silesia and southern Poland.⁴¹

According to his study, the tallest people in Europe have been the peoples of northwest Europe, inhabiting a zone extending from Ireland in the west to Estonia in the east.⁴² Furthermore, the Scandinavian and Finnish Lapps are among the shortest

³⁷ Ibid. p.4.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 10.

³⁸ Ibid. p.15

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 14.

⁴² Ibid. p. 10. This zone comprises the people of England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, northwest Germany, western Finland, Estonia and Latvia.

peoples in Europe, but short stature is also found among many Finnic peoples inhabiting northern Russia.⁴³ Lundman also notes that many and mostly poorer mountain-dwellers of south and southwest Europe are characterised by short stature, especially on the island of Sardinia and in the Spanish plateau region.⁴⁴ Moreover he notes that in earlier times the greater part of Poland and Central Russia were regions of short stature.⁴⁵

The above brief compilation, according to Lundman shows a correlation between stature and living conditions.⁴⁶ But Lundman claims that, correlations between economic conditions and head form, as measured by the cephalic index, can be established to a lesser degree than in the case of stature.⁴⁷ In other words, there seems to be no evidence of similar changes in cephalic index, which are environmentally conditioned as in the case of stature.

In any event, an interesting phenomenon enters the discussion here. Lundman notes that in Central Europe, the increase in mean cephalic index from the early Middle Ages to the nineteenth century was 'extremely pronounced'.⁴⁸ In Bavaria for instance, the population classified as brachycephalic or round-headed increased from 'some 30% to 80-90% during this time period'.⁴⁹ During the same period in 'northwestern Germany, the change was from about 20% to more than 50%'.⁵⁰ The trend toward

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp.16-17

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

greater degree of bradycephaly still continues in parts of Poland and Rumania.⁵¹ Lundman explains these changes in head form, that is, 'the relatively small decrease in mean cephalic index in recent times is probably connected with the stronger and quicker growth in youth'.⁵² The disappearance of cretinism and other conditions, produced by the importation of iodine, is partly responsible for changes in population values of head form, argues Lundman.⁵³ The above factor attributed to some changes in the mean cephalic index is perhaps overtaken by possible hereditary and environmental changes. Although Lundman cannot provide an affirmative conclusion here, he focuses on the thesis that rearrangement through selection of the hereditary composition of the population as being associated with hereditary changes.⁵⁴ Lundman cites a sharp population increase, a deterioration of the economic conditions of the lower classes in Europe, long-lasting and destructive wars, as reasons for these cephalic changes, but at the same time he concedes that this is not a sufficient explanation.⁵⁵

However, as one continues this investigation and by further employing Lundman's work, it should become apparent that his anthropological investigation and findings mimic a biological approach. That is, further to identifying characteristics such as, skin, hair and eye pigmentation for racial classification, one now has further scientific information that Lundman's study employs. In specific terms, these include the 'Head-Length Index', which is expressed as

$$\text{Height-Length Index (H.L.I.)} = \frac{\text{Height of Skull}}{\text{Length of Skull}} \times 100.$$

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid. p. 17.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p.16.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The Head-Length Index also examines three categories of skull measurement, such low-skulled (Chameacephalic), medium skulled (Orthocephalic), and high-skulled (Hypsicephalic).⁵⁷ According to Lundman's findings concerning European distribution of the Head-Length Index may be summarised in the following,

The *boundary* between the low-skulled West Europe [sic] —from northern Norway down to northern Portugal — and the high-skulled central region of Europe is up until our time often rather sharply defined. Still more sharply defined is the *border* between the high-skulled Europid populations of eastern Europe and southwest Asia and the low-skulled Mongolid populations of northern and central Asia.⁵⁸ (Emphases added).

For the purposes of this study, it is interesting to note that the concept of a *border* perhaps inevitably implies the existence of a *territory*, which has a group of inhabitants who bear certain physical characteristics. Certainly, the concept of a territory may be primitive here, but it can be said that on the basis of the evidence in Lundman's study, the 'law of nature' or natural law, rather than the 'law of man', has prevailed. In brief, the above study is an illustration of natural science, and is punctuated by the absence of social constructs. It would be erroneous to suggest that there is any notion, or the use of 'pseudo-biology' here.

The other anthropological determinant in the study of race is blood groups. Remaining with Lundman's work, he claims that 'the distribution of the alleles of the human blood groups in Europe also shows marked regional variations'.⁵⁹ It may be

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

useful to pause here to say some words on the concept of 'blood' as a potent symbol, before examining other biological aspects.

The symbolism of blood as a lifeline, vital to actual human existence, is apparent, and is also a part of the *mythology* of a culture or a society. For the purposes of this study, one is also concerned with the political potency derived from the use of blood as symbolism for identity/national identity, membership, inclusion, exclusion (endogenous/exogenous), exclusivity, to name but a few. The use of blood as a symbol can also imply to mean, bloodshed, sacrifice, patriotism, honour and glory. It may also represent as an 'ingredient' for liberation by way of a revolution martyrdom, or uprising, which in turn can also mean or imply the preservation or survival of racial blood, so as to maintain hereditary lineage, generational continuity of a group of people who share similar biological traits.

Therefore, it can be said that the concept of blood becomes incorporated in to the cultural and societal fabric of human beings. Rituals such as Remembrance Day, and other commemorative anniversaries, honour 'the fallen' in battle. However, there are broad beliefs about blood as well. For instance, in the Roman Catholic tradition, the belief is that wine is trans-substantiated into the blood of Jesus Christ during the ritual of Holy Mass, and Holy Communion.

In contrast, *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil), was the Nazi motif of common blood and soil, or a land-oriented socialism that connected city workers with farmers.⁶⁰ It was expected of German Aryan students to do labour service as a patriotic duty.⁶¹ Other manifestations of blood as political potency included the *Blutorden* (Blood

⁶⁰ Snyder, L. L. , *Encyclopaedia of the Third Reich*, (Hertfordshire, Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1998), p. 33.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Order), and *Blutschande* (Blood Shame), a term which was misused by Hitler to indicate violation of nature's law of racial purity by intermarriage with other races.⁶²

Returning to this examination of other scientific or anthropological determinants, that is the distribution of blood-alleles, where the frequency of distribution is significant for anthropologists because they are almost the only anthropological traits, which show directly the genetic differences between populations.⁶³ Further, the European distribution of blood-allele *p*, the gene for blood type A in the ABO-System, attains its highest global frequency in Europe and Asia Minor.⁶⁴ The European distribution of blood-allele *r*, (the gene for blood type O in the ABO-System) attains its maxima frequencies in the western half of the continent.⁶⁵ Finally, the European distribution of blood-allele *q*, (the gene for blood type B in the ABO-system) there is a higher *q* frequency together with a greater proportion of high-skulled crania in almost all East Europe north of the Danube River, and to the west approximately to the Finnish-Scandinavian and the German-Slavonic linguistic boundaries, as of the year 1900.⁶⁶ Lundman also claims that this higher *q*-value is far older and characteristic of many eastern Europid races.⁶⁷ In any event, it can be said, the above scientific approach has established another way of determining racial identity by means of technology — a human construct.

⁶² Ibid. p. 34.

⁶³ Lundman, B.J., *The Races and Peoples of Europe*, op cit . p. 21.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

1.3 The sociology of language

Language is a system of symbolic communication using vocal and written forms or signs. Human beings acquire knowledge of and competence in a specific language through a complex process of socialisation. Linguistic competence refers to the individual's command of both vocabulary and grammatical rules. Social communicative competence refers to the degree to which the *encoder* (the person sending the message) is responsive to the social and linguistic characteristics of the *decoder* (audience).⁶⁸ Jary and Jary point out that sociologists and social psychologists have been less concerned with the syntactic structure and other formal properties of language, but rather have concentrated on the relationship between language, ideology, knowledge and the social nature of verbal communication.⁶⁹ Other theorists argue that there is also a relationship between language and class and gender. In any event, language has been increasingly used 'as a 'model' for social relations in general, especially resting on the 'structural' rule-governed character of both.⁷⁰

However, it is considered that in the above latter instance, the authors provide only a 'mild', if not a vague account. For instance, it omits the use of language in conflict situations, where the use of propaganda can vilify another racial or ethnic group. The Nazi regime's use of the term *Untermensch* (sub-human) that is its reference to Jews and Slavs (including the Sorbs), is but one example here. It seems that the above illustration has resonance with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis⁷¹, which argues that the kind of language someone uses determines the nature of that person's thinking about

⁶⁸ Jary, D., and Jary, J., *Dictionary of Sociology*, 2nd ed. (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), p. 359.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid. p.347.

the world. Thus by extending the Sapir-Whorf thesis, it can be said here, that by taking an extreme position such as that witnessed during the Nazi regime, the latter cultivated a *Weltanschauung* (worldview), which became transformed into an *ideology* of racial supremacy.

It has been already noted that language alone can be a source of ethnic divisiveness. For instance, divisions based on language can raise concrete policy issues. This phenomenon has been experienced in Canada, where the separatists of Quebec, a French speaking province, resorted to terrorism in the 1970s, with the Parti (Bloc) Quebecois becoming a significant political party later in 1990. A referendum on separation was held in October 1995. Parti Quebecois was in power and the separatists, drawing strong support from the province's French speaking majority, attracted 49.4% of the vote, with a 94% turn out.⁷²

In brief, one can refer to the situation in Belgium, where there are currently 20 active political parties, most of them reflecting the linguistic and social divisions within the country.⁷³ Among the significant parties are the Dutch-speaking Social Christian Party (CVP), the French-speaking Social Christian Party (PSC), Flemish Liberals and Democrats (VLD), and the Flemish Vlaams Blok. One need not be detained with partisan details here, but simply to illustrate the point where linguistic conflict is concerned. Languages, religions or the literatures and cultures of ethnic groups within a national society can be disintegrative to the national society, as ethnic conflicts in Spain, Sri Lanka, and Yugoslavia and in the former Soviet Union are instances that

⁷² Derbyshire, J.D., and Derbyshire, I., *Political Systems of the World*, (Oxford: Helicon Publishing Ltd, 1996), p. 453.

⁷³ Ibid.

clearly demonstrate this phenomenon. Therefore, a theoretical explanation regarding linguistic antagonisms is needed here.

Firstly, one of the well known societal behaviours toward language is *standardisation*.⁷⁴ That is, “the codification and acceptance, within a community of users, of a formal set of norms defining ‘correct’ usage”.⁷⁵ Hence, it is argued here that the above is rather a straightforward phenomenon in any society where the range of applications of standardisations would probably include instructions of ‘how to use’ an apparatus or an appliance, street directions, dictionaries, manuals and so on. The list is endless. But, the important point to note here is that one is referring to codification. It can be said that the guardians of the codification of a language are people such as scribes, poets, (although some would argue about the liberty of, or *malleability, fluency*, in their interpretation of language in literature say, would be regarded as ‘high culture’ — a language which may not be comprehensible for those in marginalised areas of society) teachers, academicians, and writers, but at the same time such people are professional and conscious of language.⁷⁶ Written and oral forms of language are further standardised by institutions such as government, educational systems and the mass media. It can also be said that variants of a specified language may be codified by ‘sub-cultures’ such as those found amongst youth groups. But, as Fishman notes, ‘standardisation is not a property of any language *per se*, but a characteristic societal treatment of language, given sufficient diversity and need for symbolic elaboration’.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Fishman, J.A., *The Sociology of Language*, (Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, 1972), p. 18.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

However, the above may be regarded as a universal phenomenon. It does not intimate any conflictual characteristics. Another common societal view of language is concerned with *autonomy*.⁷⁸ Fishman explains it as 'the uniqueness and independence of the linguistic system, or at least of some variety within that system'.⁷⁹ Whilst it may be the case that autonomy is often of little concern to speech communities whose languages differ markedly from each other, it may be of great concern to establish their autonomy from each other, or at least that of the weaker from the stronger. For the purposes of this study, it is of note that a subservience of one language may become part of a rationale for political subservience as well. This can be observed in Sri Lanka, which has a population of 18.6 million of whom about 75 per cent are Sinhala-speaking Buddhism practising Sinhalese and 12 per cent Tamil-speaking Hindu-practising Tamils, with the rest of the population being either Christian or Muslim identifying with either language group.⁸⁰ Bostock notes that the language proportions here are Sinhala 72 per cent, Tamil 20.5 per cent, the remainder being English - or other speaking language.⁸¹ Sri Lanka has been the scene of a violent civil war in which language also seems to be implicated.⁸² In brief, 1958 witnessed riots when Sinhala was declared as the sole official language of the state. The Tamils were seeking recognition of their language and a Tamil state under a federal system.⁸³ But not all situations where there is language diversity, are characterised by violence or conflict.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 19.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Bostock, W.W., "Language Grief: A 'Raw Material' of Ethnic Conflict" in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Volume 3, Number 4, Winter 1997, p. 106.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

By way of contrast, Denison notes that historically speaking Sauris (German: *die Zahre* is a German linguistic island, in north-east Italy, physically isolated until recently from its nearest German-speaking neighbour, Sappada (*Pladen* in German)).⁸⁴

Moreover, Denison claims that the Sauris are

...sociolinguistically remarkable in that in addition to their German dialect its inhabitants use two other languages in the course of their everyday lives: the national language, Italian, and a dialect of Friulian, the regional language, which is a Romance idiom distinct from, though closely related to, Italian.⁸⁵

In other words, these are manifestations of language variety, which Denison prefers to call 'diatypic variety'.⁸⁶ According to Denison, 'diatypes are varieties of language within a community, specified according to use (purpose, function), whereas dialects are specified to groups of users'.⁸⁷ Thus in this instance, the German language can be regarded as a 'macro-structure', whereas the Saurian dialect is a linguistic 'micro-structure'. Following this method, the Sorbian language is not a microstructure in relation to the German language in the present Republic of Germany. Nor is it a dialect, but an autonomous language in a political context, and at the same time a microstructure in relation to the macro-structure of Slavonic languages such as Polish, Russian or Czech. At the same time, it can be said that in definitional terms Sorbian is not a regional language in the sense that say, the Silesian dialect is in relation to the Polish language, the latter being the official language of a sovereign state — Poland. In this sense Denison provides one with a theoretical model, which will be tested in the Sorbian context, in Chapter Three.

⁸⁴ Denison, N., "Some Observations on Language Variety and Plurilingualism" in *Sociolinguistics*, Pride, J.B., and Holmes, J., (eds.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1972), p. 65.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid p.66.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Yet scholars such as, Minahan asserts that the Sorbs are focussing ‘on formalising their position as the first Slav *nation* in the European Union.’⁸⁸ (Emphasis added). Thus to complete this survey of definitions for this study, we need to define the terms *nation* and *state*.

1.4 Defining ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘nation-state

Perhaps one of the more interesting and comprehensive definitions of the above terms can be found in Hobsbawm’s work.⁸⁹ Hobsbawm begins by asserting that ‘the basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity’.⁹⁰ In order to illustrate the modernity of the vocabulary of the subject itself, Hobsbawm notes for instance, that the *Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy* ‘does not use the terminology of state, nation and *language* in the modern manner before its edition of 1884’.⁹¹ (Emphasis added). Once again, it is noted the strong, seemingly inseparable, and direct relationship between language and the concept of a territory. It is also an integral part of the structure of the *identity* of a collective group of people. Hobsbawm further notes, that in 1884, *lengua nacional* is “the official and literary language, and the one generally spoken in that country, as distinct from dialects and the languages of other nations’ “. ⁹² Moreover, before 1884 the word *nación* simply meant “the aggregate of the inhabitants of a province, a

⁸⁸ Minahan, J., *Nations Without States*, op.cit., p. 336.

⁸⁹ Hobsbawm, E.J., *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 14.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

country or a kingdom” and also “a foreigner”.⁹³ Hobsbawm clearly defines the second term as,

[A] State or political body which recognizes a supreme centre of common government and also the territory constituted by that state and its individual inhabitants, considered as a whole, and henceforth the element of a common and supreme state is central to such definitions, at least in the Iberian world.⁹⁴

It is suggested here, that Hobsbawm’s above citation’s criteria for defining the State, is by no means restricted to the Iberian context. One can safely say that these definitions have currency here and for the purposes of the thesis. Moreover, the above definitions can be applied to most models of governance, and across the spectrum of mainstream political ideologies or practices. However, Robertson⁹⁵ in his treatment of these concepts seems to warn of any definitional complacency. For instance, he associates the term nation with the idea of nationalism, or as part of the nation-state concept.⁹⁶ But perhaps more interestingly, Robertson claims that ‘no obvious technical definition exists, but any working definition in the social sciences would include most of the following criteria’.⁹⁷ Again one can identify a constant thread permeating in this definition, as well as among others, when the Robertson cites the criteria as

A nation is a body of people who possess some sense of a single communal identity, with a shared historical tradition, with major elements of common culture, and with a substantial proportion of them inhabiting an identifiable geographical unit.⁹⁸

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Robertson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, op.cit. p. 331.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Thus, one need not be too concerned with Hobsbawm's focus on the Spanish interpretation of these terms, because he further elaborates by citing that a nation is

[T]he community of the citizens of the state, living under the same regime or government and having a communion of interests; the collectivity of inhabitants of a territory with common traditions, aspirations and interests, *and subordinating to a central power which takes charge of maintaining the unity of the group; the people of the state, excluding the governing power.*⁹⁹ (Emphases added).

Moreover, according to Hobsbawm's inquiry, in the *Dictionary of the Spanish Academy*, the final version of 'the nation' is not found until 1925 when it is described as 'the collectivity of persons who have the same ethnic origin and in general, speak the same language and possess a common tradition'.¹⁰⁰ However, it is Robertson who fortunately and conveniently provides one with an illustration that is resonant with this study. In other words, he cites the Belgian and Polish experience. In the former instance, Belgium is clearly a nation, which has sharp, long-term, religious and linguistic cleavages. The above example has been abundantly documented in the available literature, and also noting it being counter to the definition. In the second instance, a clearer example of historical discontinuity which has not prevented an intense national identity, is Poland, 'which has not existed as an independent state for much of the last 1,000 years'.¹⁰¹

Thus, one can use the above theoretical material and contemporary manifestations in this study of the Sorbs. That is, similarly to the Polish experience of nationhood, the Sorbs as a collective of people have also experienced the notions of a common

⁹⁹ Hobsbawm, E.J., *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, op.cit. p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p.331.

culture, traditions and their own language. But they have been without a 'supreme central power' (that is a 'Lusatian' government) that subordinates the collectivity of its inhabitants, as a community of the citizens of a state. Instead, Lusatia, was conquered by the Germans in 928, then lost to the Poles in 1002, and later reconquered by Germans in 1033.¹⁰² The history of the Sorbs will be further discussed in the next chapter, but for present purposes, one returns to Minahan's claim of the Sorbs as being a Slavonic nation. But in the present context, this Slavonic nation is part of the *nation-state* that is —Germany.

Interestingly, in the context of the definition(s) noted above, one can further observe departures for the definition of a nation when Fichte depicted the German experience in 1807/8 in his *Reden an die Deutsche Nation* (Addresses to the German Nation), and claimed that universalist claims of the German nation, as he conceived of it, resided in the fact, first, that it existed across boundaries of municipalities and territorial states and second, a particular nation-state that guaranteed individual rights would also represent the very model of universal Reason.¹⁰³ It was not until German unification in 1871 that German nationhood became a legitimate nation-state.

1.4.1 Nation-State and its Discontents

According to Robertson, the term 'nation-state'

... describes a context in which the whole of a geographical area that is the homeland for people who identify themselves as a community

¹⁰² See entry under "Sorbs" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 14 in 24 volumes, (Chicago: William Benton Publisher, 1965), p. 434.

¹⁰³ "The 'Communist Manifesto and the problem of universality", (author not cited), <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1132/is_n2_v50/ai_20946433/pg_4>, op.cit.

because of shared culture, history, and probably language and ethnic character is governed by one political system.¹⁰⁴

Indeed, such contexts are the common experience today and they have been common in history, such as the notion of a Greek nation, but no nation-state(s) in classical Greece. Rather, there were a number of city-states. In the modern context, Singapore, for instance, may be regarded as a city-state. In any case, it should be noted that the terms nation, state and nation-state are used interchangeably, but may lack accuracy when geography does not coincide with national and cultural identity. Moreover, since the end of the Second World War, de-colonisation resulted in the creation of several nation-states, whilst, with the collapse of communism later in the twentieth-century, saw nation-states being re-established, particularly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In the Sorbian experience, whilst the Lusatian National Council appealed to the United States (US), Britain, France and the Soviet governments for liberation from German rule, it only secured under Article II of the German Democratic Republic's constitution (1949) a guarantee to the Sorbian people for equal development of their language and culture. But, Lusatia as a region inhabited by the Sorbs remains as a nation, but not a nation-state.

One of the other phenomena that require mention here is that nation-states can be artificially created. That is, a large number of nation-states in the modern world are the arbitrary result of external power. For instance, Israel was created in 1948 when the United Nations (UN) supported the partition of the Arab and Jewish communities, when Britain ended its Palestinian mandate. Thus in brief, the conflict continues between the Arabs (Palestinians) and the Israelis, with the former being a group of

¹⁰⁴ Robertson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, op.cit. p. 332.

people without a state, while the latter has extended its territory and statehood by illegal acquisition (invasion). Yet, Article 1 (2) and 55 of the UN Charter support self-determination as a legal right of peoples and as a political aspiration.

By way of contrast, communities have used democratic means to establish their national identity and consequent nation-states. This occurred under the terms of the December 1992 constitution, which came into force on 1 January 1993 when the federal republic of Czechoslovakia split into two separate Czech and Slovak republics. Another exercise in direct democracy was witnessed in the May 1998 referenda, in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In brief, the essence of these referenda meant that not only did the Republic of Ireland revoke Articles 2 and 3 of its constitution, thereby dissolving any territorial claims for the whole of the island of Ireland by constitutional means. Also, the majority vote in the Republic and in Northern Ireland sanctioned this Anglo-Irish proposal, as well as accepting that the political future of the province (that is, Northern Ireland or Ulster), meaning whether it would be united with the Republic of Ireland, or remain to be a part of the United Kingdom, would be decided by the majority.

In any event, referring to such an entity simply as 'state' supersedes the term 'nation-state', which traditionally refers to a politically organised territory that recognises no higher law. The use of the term 'state', rather than 'nation-state', seems to be the current practice, although the two terms mean the same thing. However, for the purposes of defining these concepts, they are used as stipulated in the available literature.

Nonetheless, it seems that discourse on contemporary themes and issues, such as globalisation and regionalism, has gained momentum in dialogue and theoretical blueprints, as well as actual events in world history. These phenomena are re-shaping, yet, another version of a “world order”. According to some critics of the transnational phenomenon, such as Saul, who claims that influences like those from a global economy, are eroding the sovereignty of the nation-state.¹⁰⁵

If one were to take note of Saul’s analysis, the main theme of his argument is that, national governments are influenced by the economic power of transnational companies, which in turn affect the lives (welfare) of their citizens in their respective ‘nation-states’.¹⁰⁶ Other influences include the mass media, the English language, the Internet, and popular culture. In the latter instance, consumer goods become commodified icons that erode away cultural customs and traditions, at least in part. To be sure, the commodification of an exported culture, or in other words, a form of Americanisation ‘exported’ more and more ‘foreign markets’, has witnessed the use of these icons as a sign of status for the poor in some Third World countries.

Besides contemplating the socio-economic effects on indigenous populations, one area that comes to mind is the impact on the environment, globally and locally. The de-forestation of the Amazon basin is well reported. Another, but vastly different instance, can be seen when residents on the northern outskirts of Hobart, successfully lobbied against the installation of the “golden arches”; the globally recognisable trade

¹⁰⁵ For challenges faced by nation-states, in particular sovereignty in a globalised world, see Saul, J. R., *The Unconscious Civilization*, (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Singapore: The Free Press, 1997). *The Unconscious Civilization* is a part or volume in a trilogy by Saul. *Voltaire’s Bastards* and *On Equilibrium*, follow a similar theme as noted above.

¹⁰⁶ See Saul, J.R., “The Great Leap Backwards” in *The Unconscious Civilization*, op.cit., particularly pp.1- 38.

1.7 Nationalism

If one borrows from Robertson, a simple definition of nationalism is the political belief that some group of people represents a natural community, which should live under one political system.¹¹⁷ Moreover, nationalism is also the belief that a community should be independent of others, and usually, has the right to demand an equal standing. Further, Barry states that ‘prescriptively, nationalism carries the implication that all human beings should have one and only one nationality, which should be their primary focus of identity and loyalty’.¹¹⁸ Once more, one notes the recurring concept of *identity*.

Thus nationalist movements, — the practitioners of nationalism, hold the political principle that by separating from some existing larger state, that its nationality is wholly contained. Moreover, nationalism characteristically demands that this one nationality be organised and legitimised in a sovereign state. The nineteenth-century witnessed nationalist movements, which endorsed by the elites of the political system of the time, helped create the nation-state. Italy and Germany in 1870 and 1871 are two examples. However, nationalist separatist movements such as those found in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka or in Basque Spain, are just one expression of nationalism. Other forms have been witnessed such as the pan-German aspirations of the Third Reich and that of Slobodan Milosevic’s efforts to create a ‘greater Serbia’ in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Barry, B., cited in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Miller, D., Coleman, J., Connolly, W., Ryan, A., (eds.) op.cit. p.352.

1.8 Conflicts and language: A 'covalent' relationship

It is interesting to note that Robertson discusses the politics of language under the heading of language groups.¹¹⁹ Some of the assertions he makes can be summarised in the following: language is a major aspect of legitimisation of a culture and history; frequently, language is politically relevant where one language group is an ethnic minority suppressed by what they see as an alien conqueror or oppressing elite.¹²⁰ Furthermore, he notes that in some places having to speak the language of the rulers is not just a practical difficulty, but it can become a 'violently charged symbol of unfreedom' [sic].¹²¹ In many instances language can be associated with other social symbols, of which religion and ethnicity are the most potent.¹²² For this reason, language groups can become important centres for the focusing of revolutionary, or at least protest, in modern societies, by maintaining cleavages which might otherwise have ceased to exist.¹²³ According to Robertson, after class and religion, linguistic cleavages are the most important source of conflict in modern politics.¹²⁴ Thus, it can be deduced that if the above phenomena are a part of our table of 'raw ingredients', together with the symbolism of say, blood and pigmentation, then one is also dealing with discourse that repetitively identifies *difference* in the human species. It is the study of *differentiation*. How does this occur? Once again, it brings one back to an explanation found in the sociology of language, a fundamental building block in the experience of perception — the perception of others.

¹¹⁹ Robertson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, op.cit. p. 273.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Fishman begins his thesis by stating that the sociology of language not only focuses upon the entire range of topics related to the social organisation of language behaviour, but also language attitudes and overt behaviours toward language and language users.¹²⁵ It is not possible here to rehearse an almost endless list of case studies, but one can make some fundamental assumptions already noted from the beginning, in that

...language is content, a referent for loyalties and animosities, an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships, a marker of situations and topics as well as of the societal goals and the large-scale value-laden arenas of interaction that typify every speech community.¹²⁶

In brief, language is a part of the socialisation process that takes place in the individual and within groups of individuals or a community. Socialisation also accounts for how the collective psyche perceives itself and others. However, the historical process is also a socialisation process for societies and civilisations. Scholars and explorers alike have been the transmitters of information concerning racial differences. The following is a brief account of the historical development of racial perceptions.

1.9 The Enlightenment and the study of race

It may be interesting to note here, how some of the eighteenth century European intellectuals, philosophers, scientists and explorers perceived indigenous populations among other places, in say, the Pacific region. For instance, the Genevan born French philosopher Rousseau set forth in his *Two Discourses* and in loose terms here,

¹²⁵ Fishman, J.A., *The Sociology of Language*, (Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, 1972), p. 1.

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 4.

critiques of the human condition. More specifically, in the first the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* (1750) Rousseau asserted that the spread of scientific and literary activity was morally corrupting for society at large.¹²⁷ In the second, *The Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1755) he argued that humans had evolved from an animal-like state of nature in which isolated and stupid individuals lived peacefully.¹²⁸ For Rousseau, primitive societies like those of the indigenous Americans and Africans were the best for man; and for civilisation.¹²⁹ Similarly, Diderot who had been a friend of Rousseau in his work as editor and contributor to the *Encyclopédie* (1751-65) had little doubt of the savage state over the civilised.¹³⁰ In other words, the savage suffered only the ills of nature, the civilised man the miseries of an unjust social order and of degrading work. (Thus the term, 'the noble savage' was coined). Moreover, Robertson, the master of the *Dolphin* during its voyage to the Tahiti in June 1767 recorded how meetings between European sailors and Polynesian women were to stamp an erotic imprint on Europe's image of the South Seas. He wrote, '... my opinion plainly demonstrates, that there is both justice, and property in this happy island'.¹³¹ However, disillusionment came slowly and it was de Bougainville who made drastic revisions about the people of Tahiti. He withdrew his claims of equality and freedom among the Tahitians when he wrote,

I was mistaken: the distinction of ranks is very great at Tahiti and the disproportion very tyrannical. The kings and grandees have power of life and death over their servants and slaves, and I am inclined to

¹²⁷ Cited by Masters, R., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Miller, D., Coleman, J., Connolly, W., Ryan, A., (eds.) op.cit. p. 456.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Marshall, P.J., and Williams, G., *Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 267.

believe, they have the same barbarous prerogatives with regard to the common people.¹³²

Also, the English explorer Captain James Cook and the botanist Joseph Banks had some difficulty accepting the probability of cannibalism among New Zealand's Maoris.¹³³ Exploration by the continental powers was followed by colonisation. Thus, there is a sense of returning to a fundamental theoretical framework of the concepts of race and ethnicity, especially when imperialist policies created racial divisions. In brief, commercial and population expansion transformed homogenous indigenous populations into heterogenous populations.

1.10 Identity

In its simplest form, the term identity is used to describe what the subject possesses, or is, as part of its being. Individuals assume an identity to tell them who they are, and who they are not, what they are, and what they are not. A person's identity or a group's identity will also determine loyalties, allegiances, and antagonisms within a community, as well as between different communities.

It is noted how Fishman asserts that language is *content, and as an indicator* of the subject being discussed, whether it be an object, a concept, an emotion, a person or a group of individuals, that is, a collective of individuals.¹³⁴ (Emphasis added). Strauss further develops the concept of language and identity. As one shall soon see, these

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ For a more detailed discussion on the differences between English and French perceptions of Australian, particularly Tasmanian indigenous populations in the eighteenth century see, Robson, L., *A History of Tasmania*, Volume I (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 3-31.

¹³⁴ Fishman, J. A., *The Sociology of Language*, op.cit., p. 4.

two scholars contribute to, and complement the significance of understanding our concept of race and or ethnicity.

In the first instance, Strauss stresses the 'basic importance of language for human action and identity'.¹³⁵ Strauss begins his thesis by making a fundamental claim that 'Any name is a container; poured into it are the conscious or unwitting evaluations of the namer'.¹³⁶ In order to fully appreciate this crucial thesis of language as a part of social organisation, Strauss maintains that 'central to any discussion of identity is language'.¹³⁷ Extending our discussion further, as Strauss maintains, 'To name, then, is not only to indicate; it is to identify an object as some kind of object, that is, 'an act of identification requires that the thing referred to be placed within a category'.¹³⁸

As previously noted by Fishman, that is, the social organisation of language behaviour also includes language attitudes and overt behaviours toward language users.¹³⁹ A simple illustration of this can be seen when a group of people that has any permanence develops a special or a particular language, or jargon. For instance, workers within a government department that concerns itself with social security payments and administration may refer to the geography of where welfare recipients living in certain low socio-economic areas, as "beno land". That is, (social security) 'benefits land'. Thus, there is a propensity for certain categories invented by any group to be slanderous, resentful, discriminatory, or even aggressive. Moreover, since groups inevitably are in conflict over issues, which is what make them different

¹³⁵ Strauss, A.L., *Mirrors and Masks: The Search for Identity*, (San Francisco: The Sociology Press, 1960), p.11.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p.15.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid. p.19.

¹³⁹ Fishman, J. A., *The Sociology of Language*, op.cit., p. 1.

groups, and since events come to be viewed differently by those looking up or down opposite ends of the human spectrum, 'it is useless to talk of trying to eradicate from the human mind the tendency to stereotype, to designate nastily, and to oversimplify'.¹⁴⁰

Daily transactions in contemporary modern societies (within public and private sector enterprises) are punctuated by those who wear an identity *badge*. This is a visible way to tell us who is the person who wears the badge, and thus *identification visibility* is implemented to differentiate between memberships of a service agency, for instance a state or a corporate bureaucracy, and a taxpayer or consumer. This identity differentiation between one group and another can extend to include that the badge bearers may be holders of legal-rational authority, making the non-bearers subjects, or *outsiders*. Such differentiation may further translate into groups such as ruling elites, and the masses, or the conquered, or an oppressed minority. The Jewish Star of David worn on clothing in German occupied territories, served as a badge to identify Jews during the Nazi regime.

It has already been noted that this categorisation or attempt to identify blacks as being endowed with lower intelligence. At the same time however, the renaming of an object, then amounts to a reassessment of one's relationship to it, and thus, one's behaviour becomes changed along the line of one's reassessment'.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Strauss, A.L., *Mirrors and Masks*, op cit. p. 21.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 22.

mark of the MacDonald's fast-food chain, in their suburb. The residents considered that it would be a 'blot on the landscape'. Whether their protest also implied a challenge to a global corporation, is a matter for speculation. At the same time, the state of Tasmania has been at the centre of debate about industries such as wood chipping, and UN imposed quotas on alkaloid (opiate) production from poppy crops. Clearly, Tasmania is a state of a federal system, but it was Australia as a nation-state and signatory, having a legal international personality and sovereignty that abided by the World Heritage Convention, when the federal Labor government blocked the damming of the Franklin-below-Gordon River in Tasmania in 1983.

Thus, globalisation and its relationship to the nation-state are not merely restricted to economic or financial influences. Since the formation of the UN, there has been an increasing sense of 'world government'. Among the major organs of the UN, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the judicial organ, which not only attempts to resolve disputes between sovereign nations, but also attempts to ensure that countries, which are signatories to treaties and other provisions of international law, are bound by international law. Certainly, there is much controversy about the Court's decisions, as countries traditionally claim to be observing international law in their own interpretations, but nevertheless, there is a palpable outcome when as a global society, humanity is concerned about such issues as nuclear weapons, disease, environmental disasters, global warming, conservation, human rights abuses, justice and terrorism, just to mention a few.

However, it should be also borne in mind, that other actors that aspire to influence global welfare include non-government organisations (NGOs), rock stars, and

environmental groups such as Greenpeace, the Church, Amnesty International, and the World Bank.

Returning to the second concept, that of regionalism, which in this context may be loosely viewed as an administrative division of a group of neighbouring countries, the European Union (EU) has evolved into a supra-national institution. By this it means that, apart from the national governments of the EU's members, the continent's members are governed and accept policies, such as those on a unified currency (the Euro), (except in Britain, Denmark and Sweden), agriculture (Common Agricultural Policy or CAP), human rights (European Court of Human Rights), justice (European Court of Justice), and increasingly the prospect of a European armed force. One of the main concerns for a number of EU member states is that as members of a regional government, they forfeit some of their sovereignty.

At the same time however, the EU does concern itself with cultural policies that reduce 'national attachments and furthering a sense of EU or European identity'.¹⁰⁷ The Maastricht Treaty on the European Union, which was signed in 1992 and ratified in 1993, under Article 128, proclaims that it is committed to 'conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance'.¹⁰⁸ However, the literature seems to infer that there exists a degree of tension between the idea of European unity, or an identity, an identity 'enriched by the interplay of cultures'.¹⁰⁹ Surely, it

¹⁰⁷ Soeters, J., (1996) "Management and cultural diversity in Europe", in Bekemans, L., (ed.), *Culture: Building Stone for Europe*, (Brussels: College of Europe, European Interuniversity Press, 2002), p.169.

¹⁰⁸ Cited by Field, H., in "EU Cultural Policy and the Creation of a Common European Identity", <<http://www.pols.canterbury.ac.nz/ECSANZ/papers/Field.htm>>. Sighted January 6, 2002.

¹⁰⁹ Council of Europe, "European identity now and in the future", (author not cited), <<http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/Identity/default.asp>>. Sighted 31 August 2004.

can be said that these cultures have *identities* and thus one must also include ethnic minority groups — not just the identities of the more recognisable nation-state European Union members.

To sum up, not only can there be violent eruptions in nation-state formations, but also new states can be constructed over diplomatic tables, or by non-violent means as seen in Czechoslovakia (in 1989 and 1993). Finally, it should be noted that in today's global context, there are influences that subtly shape the nature of nation-states to conform with some notion of a world order.

1.5 Minority groups

Minorities are technically those, who are not in some way, in a majority in a particular are of a political system.¹¹⁰ As Robertson notes, 'in most usages minorities are thought of as having a common positive identity'.¹¹¹ 'The most commonly politically-important minorities are racial, religious or ethnic groups in a society who are seen as suffering across a broad spectrum of disadvantages', adds Robertson.¹¹² Furthermore, minorities can include sexual minorities, as well as mean or to identify groups that are minority political parties, or those who support them in the voting system.

1.6 Ethnocentrism

Abercrombie, Hill and Turner define this term to describe prejudicial attitudes between in-groups and out-groups by which our attitudes, customs, and behaviour are

¹¹⁰ Robertson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, op.cit. p. 316.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

unquestionably and uncritically treated as *superior* to their social arrangements.¹¹³

These authors' assertion coincides with Robertson, who points out that the term is applied to researchers, who import narrow meanings into the activities of those, he or she is studying that are foreign to them.¹¹⁴ Put differently, it can be said that it is to say that the standards by which one judges and decides are heavily culture bound, and not considered to be interchangeable between other social contexts. It is also interesting to note that writers such as Robertson refer to the bias help by some scholars, so as to produce results, who conclude about the tendency of some racial groups to perform badly on standard IQ (Intelligence Quotient) tests.¹¹⁵

Once again, this familiar pattern finds itself in this definition also. In other words, writers have attempted to correlate low intelligence with certain racial groups like Negroid and coloured groups. Thus, the same phenomenon extends to other groups, be they a Gay minority (public or clandestine) living within a heterosexual majority society, with the majority being ethnocentrically here, or the degradation of Slavonic populations by shaming, torture and death. This makes ethnocentricity a rather mild condition, if it is meant to be akin to *racism*.¹¹⁶ In brief, the notion of superiority of one racial or ethnic group over another, whether it be politically, militarily, culturally, societal structures, or academically — are manifestations of ethnocentricity. Violence against others on the basis of race is an extreme situation of the above. This is a distinguishing pattern, or theme that permeates throughout this chapter. But, it should be also noted that, regimes have relied on scientific and intellectual thought to support a policy or an ideology, although this may be a distorted interpretation to maintain a regime's dominance. Nationalism is often a part of the matrix.

¹¹³ Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., and Turner, B.S., *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, op. cit. p151.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Robertson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, op.cit. p. 316.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

One can further continue this theory using Strauss's analysis by saying that values attributed to any object —like “good” or “hateful” — really are not in the object.¹⁴²

In simple terms, Strauss explains the above by stating,

In having an experience one does not put value into it like water into a kettle. Value is not an element; it has to do with a relation between the object and the person who has experiences with the object. This is just another way of stating that the “essence” or “nature” of the object resides not in the object but in the relation between it and the namer. Value as a relation is easily seen in conjunction with such an adjective as “useful” — useful for whom, under what conditions, which of his purposes? Precisely the same is true whether the object is a thing or an event, and whether the value is “useful” or, say, “sinful”.¹⁴³

To be sure here, one can say that sinfulness is not fixed in the object, event or person.

Rather, it is a quality within the eye of God. As Strauss points out, ‘an act is sinful to *particular definers* when *perceived* as committed under certain circumstances *by persons of specified identities*.’¹⁴⁴ (Emphases added). In other words, certain definers will perceive, say, adultery to be sinful while other definers will perceive and categorise such an act as an emotional or a biological need. Furthermore, using Strauss's analysis,

Since values are not in objects but are evaluations of objects, it follows that persons must do their own experiencing in order to do their own evaluating.¹⁴⁵

So far, this discussion of language as a means of identifying objects, events, or a group of individuals has been limited. But for now, one can have an understanding of the behaviour that is associated with language use and the identity that we construct

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 24.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

by using certain language. Thus, language is used to convey the meaning that a certain group of people are members of 'another' category or classification of the human family — or in extreme circumstances, as 'subhuman', in which case the behaviour is derogatory or even persecutory. In other words, the construction of the 'other' may refer to a racial or ethnic group, or merely as 'outsiders'. But how does a collective group identify itself?

Before one can answer this, one needs to examine identity in an individual context using psychoanalytic approaches. To begin with, 'identity' may be defined as,

1....[t]he study of personality, a person's essential, continuous self, the internal, subjective concept of oneself as an individual. Usage here is often qualified; for example *sex-role identity*, *racial or group identity*. 2. In logic, a relation between two or more elements such that either may be substituted for the other in a syllogism without altering its truth value. 3. Somewhat more loosely, a "deep" relationship between elements that is assumed to exist despite surface dissimilarities. This meaning is typically qualified to express, the level at which the identity is found, for example *functional identity*. 4. Within Piagetian theory, a state of awareness that the relationship in 3 holds. The classic example here is the case of the child who is aware that a liquid maintains its "deep" identity even though it undergoes various transformations such as being poured from one container to another of different shape.¹⁴⁶

Perhaps two significant phrases in the above definition are that of 'continuous self', and a 'subjective concept of oneself as an individual'. Interestingly, to assist with the explanation of this concept of identity, Erikson refers to the phenomenon of "identity crisis", and adds that 'to review the concept of identity means to sketch its history'.¹⁴⁷ Firstly, he notes that the word "crisis" no longer connotes impending catastrophe, but it can designate 'a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must

¹⁴⁶ Reber, A. S., *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1985), p. 341.

¹⁴⁷ Erikson, E.H., *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1968) p. 15.

move one way or another, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation'.¹⁴⁸ This may be applicable to a variety of situations such as a crisis in individual development, in the formation of a new group, or in the 'tensions of rapid historical change'.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the term "identity crisis" originated during the Second World War when servicemen in rehabilitation centres, 'through the exigencies of war, had lost a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity'.¹⁵⁰ In more recent times, it has been recognised that,

The same central disturbance in severely conflicted young people whose sense of confusion is due, rather, to a war within themselves [sic], and in confused rebels and destructive delinquents who war on their society'.¹⁵¹

However, whilst the above may be useful in a clinical milieu or application, one is still left without a sufficient theoretical basis. It may be useful here to refer to a conceptual ancestor, Sigmund Freud. In an address in 1926, he said

Whenever I felt an inclination to national enthusiasm I strove to suppress it as being harmful and wrong, alarmed by the warning examples of the peoples among whom we Jews live. But plenty of other things remained over to make the attraction of Jewry and Jews irresistible – many obscure emotional forces, which were the more powerful the less they could be expressed in word, as well as a clear consciousness of inner identity, the safe privacy of a common mental construction. Because I was a Jew I found myself free from many prejudices which restricted others in the use of their intellect; and as a Jew I was prepared to join the Opposition, and to do without agreement with the "compact majority".¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 16.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 20.

What is important here is that according to Erikson's analysis, Freud used the term identity in a most central *ethnic* sense.¹⁵³ (Emphasis added). That is, for Freud's "consciousness of inner identity", 'includes a sense of bitter pride preserved by his dispersed and often despised people throughout a long history of persecution'.¹⁵⁴ As it happens, Erikson's interpretation of Freud's address returns us to some recurring themes that have been noted in our definitions of race and ethnicity, and linguistic cleavages. Thus, for present purposes, it may be useful here to elaborate on these conceptual definitions by further using Erikson's study where he states

... that one person's or group's identity may be relative to another's, and that the pride of gaining a strong identity may signify an inner emancipation from a more dominant group identity, such as that of the "compact majority". An exquisite triumph is suggested in the claim that the same historical development which restricted the prejudiced majority in the free use of their intellect made the isolated minority sturdier in intellectual matters [sic].¹⁵⁵

In brief, this survey and analysis of identity inevitably returns to the central focus on race relations.

Thus, identity is a *process*. It is a process according to Erikson is,

....located in the *core of the individual* and yet also *in the core of his communal culture*, a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of those two identities.¹⁵⁶ (Emphases added).

Moreover,

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 21.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 22.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

...in psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. This process is for the most part unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated, "identity-consciousness".¹⁵⁷

However, it should be noted that identity is not necessarily fixed or permanent. For instance, it is possible to view personal development as a transformation of identity. In simple terms, one can witness this when a child develops into an adult. There is a beginning, middle and end. All of these stages of the life cycle bear some relationship to each other. As Strauss puts it, 'Development (or the relations between "permanence and change", between "before" and "after") may be conceptualised as a series of related transformations'.¹⁵⁸ It can also be said that there is also a change in psychological status. One can point to numerous illustrations of transformations, such as, the rites of passage when for instance, a woman becomes a bride, then a wife and then a mother. Some transformations mark the course of adult careers, together with terminological and conceptual shifts, perceptions and consequent re-evaluations in a new status.

As Strauss notes,

Some transformations of identity and perspectives are planned, or at least fostered, by institutional representatives; others happen despite, rather than because of, such regulated anticipation; and yet other transformations take place outside the orbits of the more visible

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. pp. 22-23.

¹⁵⁸ Strauss, A. L., *Masks and Mirrors*, op.cit. p. 91.

social structure, although not necessarily unrelated to membership within them.¹⁵⁹

Moreover, there are other aspects that can denote personal (or collective) change. They are critical events or incidents, which can be termed as 'turning points'. Thus, it can be said that the collective psychological status is transformed say, when a population becomes a nation, particularly when a country gains independence after a history of being colonised. Certainly, this is but one example of a turning point in the history of a group of people (racial, ethnic,/indigenous, and so on), but it can be said here that there are other turning points that would impact on the collective psyche such as an uprising, or revolution, partition or re-unification. Thus, it can be also argued that these phenomena have an influence on collective identity, which may in turn invigorate solidarity. If an anniversary is observed and 'ritualised', such as the current centenary celebrations in Australia to mark one hundred years of federation, such milestones also maintain a continuity in the 'ways of life' within a population. In recent times, Australian politicians have focussed on the social and historical values of what it means, or to be 'an Australian'.

A transformation, and therefore a change in status may involve an oppressed group becoming the master, rather than the servant. In brief, it may be transformed into a sovereign state, and this may include physical boundaries or a territory. But what can be said about the *collective identity* of this group? Does it change or transform? Or, does it maintain its sameness and historical continuity? Part of the answer lies within the concept of *culture*.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 92-93.

1.11 Culture

Culture is the human creation and use of symbols and artefacts.¹⁶⁰ Jary and Jary continue their definition in the following.

Culture may be taken as constituting the 'way of life' of an entire society, and this will include codes of manners, dress, language, rituals, norms of behaviour and systems of belief, Sociologists stress that human behaviour is primarily the result of nurture (social determinants) rather than nature (biological determinants). Indeed, human beings may be distinguished from other animals by their ability to collectively construct and transmit symbolic meanings. Knowledge of a culture is acquired via a complex process, which is fundamentally social in origin. Human beings are both acted on by culture and act back, and so generate new cultural forms and meanings. Thus, cultures are characterised by their historical nature, their relativity and their diversity. They undergo change alongside changes in the economic, social and political organisation of society. Furthermore, human beings initiate cultural transformation out of their unique capacity to be reflexive.¹⁶¹

Thus in a contemporary context one can witness the phenomenon known as 'popular culture', which can be loosely referred to as the culture of the masses or subordinate classes. For instance, during the last century, music such as 'rock-n-roll' became popular worldwide, and in the latter period of the century, other phenomena, such as 'popular art' could be found in the work of such artists like Andy Warhol.

However, another form of culture is sometimes referred to as 'high culture' which, may for instance, be an expression of a society's esoteric, or aesthetic value in literature, language, music and the arts. The above may also be recognisable by their country of origin. For instance, it can be said that a certain musical piece by Beethoven is a part of German high culture. However, it can also be a universal manifestation.

¹⁶⁰ Jary, D., and Jary, J., *Dictionary of Sociology*, op. cit., p. 139.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

1.12 Conclusion

A precise definition of 'race' is elusive and problematic. Since the earliest times, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that it has been a feature of human populations to migrate within the known world. It seems that human populations have always exhibited some degree of interbreeding, and this has greatly increased during the past few centuries. Moreover, colonisation and conquest of new territories has produced large groups of people who defy racial classification. As Pitchford maintains,

“Pure races” have probably never existed, and certainly do not exist now. According to this thesis, race is a cultural myth, a label that has no biological basis but is attached to buttress invidious social distinctions'.¹⁶²

Some physical anthropologists have narrowed the concept to include three main racial groups: the Negroid, Caucasoid and Mongoloid races.

Similarly, there is not complete agreement on how ethnicity should be defined. Few societies are ethnically homogenous. Rather, as Barth notes, recent definitions have focussed on the existence of a recognized social boundary. Despite definitional disagreements, as Alba notes, there is general recognition that a number of characteristics appear as hallmarks of ethnicity; not all of them will be present in every case, but many will be.¹⁶³ They include features shared by group members such as same or similar geographic origin, traditions or customs, language, religion, folklore, music, foods, music and residential patterns. It should be noted however, that in essence, we are all 'ethnic'. For instance, an Australian may view other groups of

¹⁶² Pitchford, S.R., *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Volume 4, op. cit. p. 2330.

¹⁶³ Alba, R. D., *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Volume 2, op. cit., p. 841.

people as ethnic, when in fact Australians can be considered as being ethnic in the eyes of others.

Any claim of *territory* by an ethnic group is typical of special political concerns, especially with regard to a *homeland*. Institutions such as social clubs can serve to maintain the continuation of an ethnic group's sense of ownership of an ancestral land. The salience of the notion of a homeland, or a boundary cannot be understated. Interestingly, Lundman's anthropological study shows how physical features of different groups, such as cephalic indices, and blood allele frequency of distribution among the peoples of Europe. Thus, these categorisations of physical traits seem to form a pattern that denotes *boundaries*, although at an embryonic stage in conceptual terms.

There is also a consciousness of some kind, or a sense of distinctiveness from others. In simple terms, and in the same way that one can explain the above phenomenon at an individual level, the concept of distinctive-ness can be stated as, "This is what I am; this is what I am not". In other words, I am "I am a Sorbian. I am not a German". Thus in a collective sense, it can be said, "this is who we are, that is who we are not". Therefore, it follows that this consciousness has implications for *identity*.

Groups of people who share an identity (nationality or ethnicity) may be inhabitants of a territory, which may be either a sovereign entity known as 'the state', that is a legal entity, or, a group may be a nation that is politically subservient to a state. A part of this political subservience may be the linguistic dominance by a state over a

minority or ethnic group. This is attained by the standardisation of a language, which may include an 'official language policy'.

Thus, the relationship between language and identity of a racial group is inseparable, and may be the basis for ethnic conflict. This in turn may lead to a belief of superiority over the subservient group. Such a belief of superiority may be manifested culturally, intellectually, politically or militarily. It is often the case that notions of racial superiority are expressed in an ideology of nationalism.

The key theme that characterises the definitional analysis in this chapter is one of *difference* between one group of people and another. In brief, it is a study of *differentiation*. Yet, at the same time in this investigation, it seems to suggest that the phenomenon of differentiation, whether it is scholastically, scientifically or socially, it is an inevitable trait of the human condition.

Finally, another pattern that this chapter's study seems to indicate, is, the *cyclical* and *resembling* nature of the concepts in question. For instance, binary characteristics can be witnessed in the terms race and ethnicity; language and identity; racism and ethnocentrism, nation and state. In other words, the concepts defined in this chapter are symbiotically inter-related. The terms defined separately in the above, may be processes that occur simultaneously, and these are the definitions that will serve as theoretical blueprints for the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter 2

*To say where those who first spoke Slavonic were at home is beyond knowledge, but not beyond conjecture.*¹

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the main objective is to outline a history of the area in Germany that is referred to as Lusatia, or, Lausitz as it is known in German. Today, this area is geographically distinguished by two, but made up of smaller regions known as Niederlausitz, or Lower Lusatia, and Oberlausitz, or Upper Lusatia. The Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia are usually referred to as Sorbs, or Wends, and there has been some lively debate about the distinction between the terms, if not identities. This question of distinction (if any) between the two groups will be the subject of investigation later in this study. But for now, it is reasonable to refer to the Sorbs as a distinct ethnic group living in either the Upper or Lower part of Lusatia, and thus can be referred to in this study as Upper and Lower Sorbs respectively. The terms are used interchangeably in this inquiry.

The Lower Sorbs in the Land of Brandenburg are the descendants of the Lausizer (sometimes written as Luzici) who immigrated with other Slavonic tribes at the time 500 to 600 BC.² The Lausizer also met and mingled with the more powerful tribe of the Surbi, which is mentioned in history for the first time around 630 BC. Other Slavonic tribes settled in the southern area at the same time, which included the tribe

¹ Entwistle, W.J., and Morison, W.A., *Russian and the Slavonic Languages*, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1949), p. 17.

² Dvornik, F., *The Making of Central and Eastern Europe*, (London: The Polish Research Centre Ltd, 1949), p. 13.

of the Milzener (sometimes written as Milceni). The Milzener settled in the area of what today are the places Kamenz, Bischofswerda and Bautzen (Upper Lausitz).³ In contrast to all the other Slavonic tribes, the two tribes mentioned above today have descendants who have kept Slavonic cultural and linguistic features.⁴ These two tribes have been called Sorbs since the nineteenth-century.

Estimates of the Sorbian population have been disputed and have varied at different points in history.⁵ There seems to be no agreement on the precise number of Sorbs who speak their native language, but it is sufficient here to say, that their small population has been one reason, among others, such as viability, to prevent this small Slavonic minority to become an independent state. Needless to say, such historical surveys thus far, are incomplete. In order to provide a more comprehensive study, it is necessary to take into account the context of the history of the Slavonic race, or peoples. At the same time however, it will be necessary to heavily focus on German history from the Middle Ages, particularly the areas of Brandenburg and Saxony, as this is where the Sorbs seems to have gravitated over time.

Thus, the chronology of this chapter will begin from about 500-600 B.C. It will continue up to 1945, and the period soon after, when Sorbian national consciousness and separatism, were perhaps at their highest point in their history. Moreover, this chapter will rely heavily on the available scholarship of Methodius, Radosavljevich,

³ The Sorbs suffered their first defeat in 806. According to legend, Karl, the son of Charles the Great was able to reach the lands of the Milzener, who were strong enough to survive the onslaught. It was not until 965, that the Milzener lost their independence.

⁴ See Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1972), p. 10. Stone also refers to the *Drevani* tribe, who were located near the southeast town of today's Lüneburg. The *Drevani* were an exception in that they were able to retain their language until the eighteenth century, despite conquest and colonisation

⁵ The issue of statistics concerning the Sorbian population will receive a brief discussion in the Appendices.

Dvornik, Stone and Barker, among others. One of the central aims of this chapter however, is not only to provide a narrative of sequential events, but it also tries to establish, or rather identify the Sorbs as a distinct Slavonic group, and accord them some tangible perimeters, or territory. This in turn will provide the basis for further analysis that particularly concerns us later, which is, the concept of a Slavonic *nation*, its language, political and ethnic identity.

2.1 Who are the Slavs?

The whereabouts of the original habitat of the ancient Slavs has preoccupied scholars for considerable time and many answers that were put forward to this question were not satisfactory. These included ‘the naive explanation’ that the Slavs came from the Danubian region.⁶ Kinder and Hilgemann note that the Slavs are a major branch of the Indo-European family of peoples, who originally lived in the Pripet Marches or basin⁷, a region known as Polesie.⁸

Interestingly, on the basis of philological evidence, ‘it was observed that the primitive Slavs had no term for the trees, beech, larch and yew, whereas they did have a word for hornbeam’⁹. It was argued that from this evidence, that

[T]he original habitat of the Slavonic race must have been located beyond the limit of the above-mentioned trees, that is to say, east of a line running from Königsberg in modern Prussia (now Kaliningrad) to Odessa. The marshy terrain of Polesie, which was especially suited to the hornbeam, was thus regarded as the primitive home of the Slavs.¹⁰

⁶ Kinder, H., and Hilgemann, W., *The Penguin Atlas of World History*, Volume 1 in 2 volumes, translated by Menze, E.A., (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974), p. 111.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dvornik, F., *The Slavs Their Early History and Civilization*, (Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1956), p. 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 3-5.

From the outset, one can observe that controversy and possibly scholarly bias arises in this study and is elaborated upon in the following argument. From the above extract, it was surmised, ‘particularly in circles where Slavs were regarded as an inferior race’, that the civilisation developed by a people living in such an environment would have been of a ‘poor and squalid kind’.¹¹ In this instance, Dvornik is critical of this theory being ‘rashly developed’ by Peisker, who

... pictured the Slavs as a people harassed for centuries by Mongolian nomads, enslaved by them from time to time and constantly endeavoring to hide from their terrible tormentors by skulking in the trackless marshes and impenetrable forests.¹²

Dvornik continues his criticism of Peisker’s ideas of Slavonic enslavement by Mongolians as ‘absolutely false’, and ‘his philological arguments in support of his strange theory were long ago refuted by specialists in Slavonic archaeology and philology’.¹³ It soon became evident to others, that

... a people confined for centuries to a territory of such small dimensions could not possibly have developed into the mighty nation which, from the sixth century A.D., astonished all contemporary Byzantine and Latin writers by its vast numbers and by the robust vitality manifested as it breached the defenses of the Roman Empire in southeastern Europe.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid. p. 5. Dvornik attributes this line of argument to F. Peisker found in Volume II of the *Cambridge Medieval History*, Chapter XIV: “The Expansion of the Slavs”.

¹² Ibid. p. 5.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Thus, it is of note here that in view of the above consideration, some archaeologists extended the primitive habitat of the Slavs from the Pripet basin southwards towards the Carpathian Mountains and westwards towards the Vistula.¹⁵

For present purposes however,

... the primitive Slavs must have lived for a long period as neighbours of the Germans, the Balts, and the Thracians, who together with the Slavs, the Celts, the Proto-Italians, Illyrians and Greeks, formed the European branch of the great Indo-European groups of nations.¹⁶

The area settled later included parts of Poland, White Russia and the Ukraine. During the early centuries the history of the Slavs was connected with that of the Germans (Goths), Huns, Alani and Turkomans, along with whom the Slavs often entered fruitful relationships.¹⁷ This is perhaps a good opportunity to familiarise with different Slavonic tribes.

Once again, one needs to rely upon the succinct works of Kinder and Hilgemann, as they note that Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, and the geographer Claudius Ptolemy called them *Venedi* or *Veneti*. The Germans called them *Wenden*.¹⁸ Sixth century Byzantine writers (Procopius and Jordanes) spoke of the Sklavenoi, placing them along the Lower Danube, but also in the eastern Alps. From 600, Slavonic peoples (Abodrites, Sorbs, Veneti and Pomerani) settled east of the River Elbe in the areas vacated by German tribes. These Slavonic tribes, along with the Czechs, have had their historical

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kinder, H., and Hilgemann, W., *The Penguin Atlas of World History*, op. cit. p. 111.

¹⁸ Ibid.

records verifiable only in the Carolingian period. Charlemagne constructed the *limes sorbicus* in 805, which defined the easternmost Frankish trade settlements.¹⁹ The point here is not to overstep a historical timeline, but to merely illustrate how these events resonate with the theoretical framework established in the previous chapter. In brief, it can be referred to as the heterogeneity of peoples, realised by migration of populations, colonisation or conquest, formations of tribal coalitions and intermarriage between tribal groups. This survey will return to the respective periods and their histories in more detail below.

2.1.1 Groupings of the Slav tribes

The previous chapter concluded among other things, that it seems to be an inevitable human activity to *categorise* fellow human beings. Thus, it finds that the following literature is also about the systematic *classification*, or *differentiation* of racial groups. The eastern Slavs, or the Russians, were later subdivided into Ukrainians, White and Great Russians. The western Slavs are a broad grouping for Poles, Pomerani, Abodrites, Sorbs, Czechs and Slovaks. Meanwhile, the southern Slavs are the Slovenes, Serbs, Croats and Bulgars.²⁰

It must be noted however, that the above categorisation has some marked limitations with assisting in such a study, when it comes to recorded or reconstructing early Slavonic history, let alone early Sorbian history.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The scarcity of Slavonic archaeological evidence is often cited in the available literature. It can be suggested here that there are similar anomalies observed when studying early Celtic civilisation. The point here is, the term 'Slavs' like the 'Celts' can have erroneous connotations. For instance, whilst common usage of the term Celts is associated with the inhabitants of Wales, Cornwall, Scotland and Ireland, recent deoxynucleic acid (DNA) tests reveal that there is a marked reduction in the genetic linkage with the early Celtic tribes found on continental Europe. But, the interesting feature that links certain 'Gaelic' or Celtic parts of continental Europe, that is areas

2.1.2 Problems with historical evidence and tribal nomenclature

For the purposes of this study, it may be useful to first establish the early habitats of the non-Slavonic tribes. Dvornik asserts that there is no doubt about the primitive habitat of the Germans as being located in southern Scandinavia, Denmark, the islands and the part of the coast between the rivers Elbe and Oder.²² The Balts, Dvornik maintains, 'have remained in their original home right up to modern times', whilst the Thracians' primitive home was in what is now Hungary.²³

Moreover, the theoretical antagonisms that exist in the task to locate the primitive Slavs become apparent when it would be logical to locate the primitive Slavs 'much nearer to the original home of the Germans and the Balts'.²⁴ But, against this supposition there was, the philological argument noted above. According to Dvornik,

... this difficulty has been resolved only recently [1978] when it was demonstrated that in the early prehistoric period climatic conditions in Europe were very different from what they were at a later date, and that not only was the region which was regarded as the original habitat of the Slavs – outside the area where the beech, the larch and the yew were known to grow, but also were the lands lying between the Elbe and the Oder, the Vistula and the Bug.²⁵

like Breton or Gaul, is the similarity found in the *language* that exists in these parts, as well as in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This argument has been presented in the series *The Celts*, Part 1 in a six part series Special Broadcasting Service (SBS - Television Australia), transmitted July 9, 2002. However, archeological evidence uncovered in the British Isles, particularly in Northern Ireland reveals significantly more information about the early 'Celtic' civilisation than in this instance, a localised area such as that of Lusatia. For comparison, see Bardon, J. *A History of Ulster*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1992), pp. 1-10.

²² Dvornik, F., *The Slavs*, op.cit. pp. 5-8.

²³ Ibid. p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Notwithstanding the above difficulty, it is of note here is the need to rely on archaeological evidence. Excavations by Polish archaeologists in the Pripet region between 1920 and 1938 failed to show any evidence, which would support the theory that a large number of people ‘had made a prolonged stay there in prehistoric times’.²⁶ As Dvornik notes, ‘on the other hand, the evidence suggests that it was not until Roman times that the Pripet region came to be populated in a marked degree’.²⁷ Archaeologists such as Czekanowski, Kozłowski, Kostrzewski and Sulimirski from the modern Polish school of archaeologists argued on the above premises that ‘the primitive habitat of the Slavs should be located in the lands between the Elbe, Oder, Vistula and Bug Rivers’.²⁸ According to the Polish scholars cited above, “Lusatian culture”, of which the rich remnants — mostly pottery — are to be seen in all the museums of Central and Eastern Europe, was a product of the primitive Slavs’.²⁹

There is a sense that the archaeological investigations conducted by scholars thus far, lack some confidence in the validity of their findings, and thus engage in speculation, or speculative theory about the ‘origins of the Slavs’. But in order to be fair, the availability of the early history of the Slavs (which include the Sorbs in this study) is found to be limited. Moreover, scholars seem to be ambiguous about this point alone. For instance, Portal claims that ‘the earliest stirrings of Slav history are visible between the sixth and ninth centuries AD, on the eastern flank of a Europe which already had a good deal of recorded history behind it’.³⁰ Portal makes a useful point when he illustrates a contradiction in the following

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Portal, R., *The Slavs*, translated by Evans, P., (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), p. 2.

Why then, in this Europe - or rather- Eurasia - of which they were and are an integral part, should we make a distinct entity out of the Slavs, whose origins are European; who have no anthropological homogeneity which would set them apart from their western neighbours; who do not constitute a race in any meaningful sense of the term; and who have been deeply involved in European history for the last ten centuries?³¹

Yet, Dvornik among others freely admits his resignation to the paucity of recorded history, and wishes that more were to be found in the works of classical Greek and Roman writers. However, as the Slavs were originally settled so far from the Mediterranean, it explains why they remained unknown to the Greeks and Romans for so long.³² For example, one can note that there is a degree of speculation when Dvornik states that

Of the early Greek historians, only Herodotus *may have been* aware of their presence beyond the sources of the Dniester and the Bug and on the middle of the Dnieper. The Neuroi and the Bundini, whom he locates there, were *probably* Slavonic. It *might* also be that the "Scythians Plowmen," whom he distinguishes from other Scythians, were also partly Slavs.³³ (Emphases added).

The italicised words in the above passage can be viewed as 'approximations' of the early history of the Slavs. This practise is perhaps further compounded by the lack of recorded history when Dvornik notes 'that after Herodotus one finds no mention of the Slavs in Greek literature until the second century of our era, when they are mentioned on the map of Claudius Ptolemy'.³⁴

³¹ Ibid.

³² Dvornik, F., *The Slavs*, op. cit. p. 13.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

Yet, scholars such as Niederle are able to locate a “Lusatian culture,” which in this context has a quality of specificity, by referring to particular groups of Slavs.³⁵ By the same token, Niederle’s findings are problematic. On the one hand Polish scholars ‘seem to have clarified some of these problems so that today their theory appears to be a not unreasonable hypothesis’ [sic].³⁶ But, on the other hand, ‘one of the greatest puzzles which continue to baffle archaeologists is the origin and evolution of Lusatian culture’.³⁷ This question is further compounded by remnants of Lusatian culture, which are found in eastern Bohemia and Moravia.

According to Dvornik, ‘It has not yet been possible to determine which people created the Lusatian culture’, despite several theories having been advanced.³⁸ Some have attributed it to the Illyrians or to the Thracians, while other to an unknown people, or to several ethnical components, whose place was later taken by the Slavs.³⁹ At the same time however, Niederle asserts in the following conclusion,

If we deny the Slavonic character of the archaeological material of Lusatia, Silesia and Przeworsk (in Poland) there would then be, from the archaeological point of view, no room in the Roman period for a great Slavonic people west and east of the Vistula. This would be absurd because Tacitus and Ptolemy locate the Slavs east of the Vistula and speak of them as a numerous people.⁴⁰

In any event, for the purposes of this study it remains restricted to the scholarship of Dvornik in that ‘most of the prehistoric maps show a vacuum in the lands where the

³⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Lusatian culture flourished'.⁴¹ But once again, one has to contend with speculation if, on the balance of probabilities, as Dvornik suggests, that 'on several grounds it would seem reasonable to fill this vacuum with the Slavs'.⁴² Further, he maintains that such a hypothesis 'would render more understandable the rapid expansion of the Slavs in historical times'.⁴³

Here, exists the potential for precision to be compromised in conducting a historical survey, when scholars use the terms 'Slavs' and 'Lusatian culture' interchangeably. For instance, Soviet authorities differ from the Polish school in an important respect. They regard the Lusatian culture '*as one of the elements which contributed most notably to the origin of the primitive Slavs and their culture*'.⁴⁴ Czech experts, especially Filip and Poulík, side with the Russian archeologists.⁴⁵

The point remains however, that caution is needed when using such terms interchangeably, otherwise there may emerge an inaccurate historical representation of 'Lusatian culture' such as it being the cultural centre for some kind of a 'pan-Slavonic' empire, or domination. Or, in strict terms, should that be 'pan-Lusatian'? Davies maintains there is no general agreement as to the location of the Slavs 'prior to their irruption into the Balkans in the sixth and seventh centuries; and there is no sure record of their presence to the East of the Elbe and the Oder before the eighth century'.⁴⁶ Furthermore, 'according to non-Polish authorities, there is little reason to put a Slavonic tag on the 'Lusatian Culture' of the Vistula Basin in the Iron Age, and

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Davies, N., *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 283.

still less to identify the ancient Vandals as Slavonic 'Wends'.⁴⁷ The nomenclature is understandably confusing. For the purposes of simplicity, it is noted that 'Lusatian culture' is synonymous with the Sorbs and Wends, as the protagonists of Lusatian culture. However, this nomenclature becomes more complex, when one surveys early Slavonic history in the context of multiple and ethnic tribes, warring and co-existing in what is now modern Europe.

2.2 Early history

Dvornik's study claims that recent discoveries associated with the Lusatian culture, that is, 'archeological evidence that the centres of civilization – particularly in its western part - were destroyed about the year 500 BC.'⁴⁸ As Portal notes, on the question of the Slavs' original habitat and their expansion during the thousand years before Christianity, remains controversial for Slav and German historians, and it still much debated.⁴⁹

In 1934 excavations begun at Biskupin in Poland. They uncovered sites of great antiquity dating back to the third and second millennia BC. This discovery yields significant information on the 'Lusatian' civilisation of the proto-Slavs, the pre-Christian ancestors of the Slavs. At Biskupin there were found the remains of a fortified town, which numbered about one thousand inhabitants. This town being of a substantial size, was organised on

... typical primitive community lines, eventually declined but was succeeded by others on the same site; continuous occupation, in

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Dvornik, F., *The Slavs*, op. cit. p. 12.

⁴⁹ Portal, R., *The Slavs*, op. cit. p. 25.

changing form, can be traced down to the earliest period of Poland's existence as a unified state.⁵⁰

However, staying with Portal's study, the Slavs' civilisation is connected by the Lusatian civilisation,

... dating from the third millennium BC and covering an extensive area bounded by the Baltic and the Carpathians, the Oder and the upper reaches of the Volga and Oka.⁵¹

As this study begins to unfold, it begins to construct the concept of boundaries, and their violations, no matter how crude they appear. For this reason it is warranted that Dvornik's succinct thesis, based on Sulmirski's study of this period, is cited in full.

From 500 BC onwards,

[T]his culture shows quite different features, which are evidenced also in the eastern part of the territory. The cause of the destruction of these Lusatian centres appears to have been a hostile incursion by the Scythians. These were an Iranian people closely related to the Ossetians, who still live in the northern Caucasus. They came to eastern Europe in the eighth or seventh century BC, if not earlier, and founded an empire in southern Russia. This extended westwards to the Danube, eastwards to the Don and northwards to the sources of the Dnieper, and the Bug.⁵²

Turning to the work of the famous Greek historian Methodius, who visited the Black Sea region, and provides some detailed information about them. The path of the Scythian invasion of Central Europe can be followed through Silesia, Moravia and

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 24.

⁵² Dvornik, F., *The Slavs*, op.cit. p. 12.

Bohemia. There are numerous Scythian tombs that lie on the route of the invasions and at locations, which were “Lusatian” strongholds, and in the territory of Lusatian culture.⁵³ Once again, there is speculation that the eastern part of the territory suffered less destruction, and ‘that the population there surrendered to the invaders without a fight’.⁵⁴

In brief, Dvornik argues that this invasion considerably weakened the native population, thus enabling neighbours such as the Germans to press to the Oder and the Celts, who until then had settled in modern France and western and southern Germany, to move towards the east and occupy Bohemia, Moravia, parts of Silesia and the lands of the upper Vistula.⁵⁵ The Celts’ expansion and migration, together with a violent upheaval in Italy in 390 BC, where they sacked Rome, also shook Asia Minor where some of the Celts found a definite home, and became the Galatians to whom St. Paul addressed one of his epistles.⁵⁶

Finally, Dvornik refines his considerations into two suppositions given below. If it is suggested that the Slavs were the people who created a Lusatian culture, then it is understandable that this Lusatian civilisation was severely damaged by the Scythian invasion.⁵⁷ At the same time however, it refutes the idea that the Slavs were responsible for the Lusatian culture, which according to Dvornik it seems reasonable that after the Scythian invasion ‘the native population of the Lusatian territory was gradually replaced by advancing towards the Elbe and the Baltic’.⁵⁸

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 12-13.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Once again, there is room here for confusion or ambiguity attributed to the interchangeability of terms. For instance, it raises several questions such as: why not call the inhabitants of this territory *Lusatians*, or *Sorbians*, or *Wends*, rather than refer to an imprecise term as 'Lusatian culture'? How long did the Scythians occupy this territory? Was it long enough for a Scythian presence and influence to enable the creation, and/or, evolution of the 'Lusatian culture', or its destruction? It still prompts the question, were the indigenous Lusatians (here also it also means to include those named as Sorbs or Wends) a part of the Slavonic race? In a sense the above questions rotate back to the phenomena, which can be qualified as a "human obsession", that is, to classify and differentiate the human species. Certainly, one can be satisfied with the notion that Lusatians and Slavs are regarded as part of the Indo-European grouping. In any event, inquisitorial qualities should not diminish, as at last Dvornik provides one with something concrete in terms of a historical survey. That is,

On the ruins of the Lusatian culture there arose another civilisation, this time undeniably Slav, which archeologists call "Venedian" and which attained its zenith in the first century of our era.⁵⁹

The scarcity of historical information has been already noted above, with the exception of the classical Greek and Roman historians. Ptolemy in the second century AD (or 'common era') calls the Carpathian Mountains the Mountains of the Slavs, and some of the tribes located by him in that region 'should be regarded as Slavs'.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 13.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

The Baltic he also refers to as the Sea of the Slavs and refers to the Slavs on the Vistula.⁶¹

Moreover, Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) knew that there were Slavs (Venedi) living on the Vistula, and Tacitus (about AD 55-120), in his descriptions of Germania, places the Venedi east of the Germans.⁶²

It can be said here that, if the “Lusatian Slavs” came into direct contact with the Celts and the Germans, then ‘Lusatian culture’ would also share some elements of their cultures or cultural practises. Therefore, ‘Lusatian culture’ would not be an exclusive entity or concept as contact with other ethnic groups would be the genesis of cultural heterogeneity, rather than cultural (or ethnic) homogeneity.

Thus, in order to achieve the task of determining the origins of the Slavs, and later, more accurately the origins of the Sorbs, one is compelled to trace the early Roman history, and the events that impacted on the region in question. In fact, one needs to heavily rely on Roman history here, because it is not until the sixth century that there are more precise reports on the activities of the Slavs.

The Romans came near to the territory inhabited by Slavs, when the Romans tried to subdue the Germans who had steadily moved into northern and central Germany since 1000 BC. Earlier, in about the year 100 BC, the Germans forced the Celts to abandon parts of southern Germany and had occupied it completely themselves. The habitat proper - of the Celts - was Gaul. Gaul fell into the hands of the Romans between 58

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid. p. 14.

and 51 BC. Attacks by Germanic tribes on Gaul forced the Romans, with Caesar its conqueror, to attempt a policy of 'subjugation and subsequent latinization'.⁶³ At the same time, Caesar was acutely aware of the Germanic danger saved Gaul for Rome, and his victory was followed by a new Roman offensive against the Germans.⁶⁴

Dvornik notes that Agrippa started to latinise some Germanic tribes, which the victorious Romans had forced to settle them on the left bank of the Rhine.⁶⁵ Similarly, the argument of the 'Lusatian culture' as having inheriting some cultural features of *other* Slavs has been noted above. But, as it will soon be apparent in the following, this early period is characterised by multi-tribal, or even multi-ethnic groupings, engaged in conflict. Two questions arise here. First, could such ruptures that reoccurred in these regions, be conducive to the formation of distinct ethnic identities, and their consequent cultures? Second, is it not unreasonable to make the supposition that due to these ruptures, there would be a claim on a given territory, and eventually a homeland?

In brief, Rome first of all secured possession of Raetia and Pannonia between 35 and 8 BC, which were inhabited by Illyrians. At that time, Augustus gave to order to attack, and his son-in-law Nero Claudius Drusus, penetrated from the North Sea to the rivers Ems and Weser. The Germanic tribes that were conquered, the Batavians and the Frisians, had to accept Roman domination in the year 12 BC and this conquest was followed by occupation of the Chatti's (Hessians) tribal land between the Rhine and Weser.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 15.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

In the year 9 BC, the Roman advance continued, and Drusus set up his command at Mainz, on the river Elbe. Germanic tribes of the Schwabian family, such as the Marcomanni and Quadi, fearful of the Roman advance, began to move eastwards. In search of a new home, they eventually settled in what is now modern Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, after they had expelled the Celtic Boii.⁶⁶

Tiberius, the brother of Drusus completed the victories with the territory between the Rhine and the Elbe became a Roman province. In the Forest of Teutoburg, in 9 AD, Tiberius avenged the massacre of Varus and 'smashed the Germanic bands in the years 14 to 16 AD'.⁶⁷ Tiberius, who ruled from 14 to 37 AD, abandoned his aggressive policy due to costly and practical administrative problems, thus ordering the evacuation of the territory lying between the Ems and the Elbe.⁶⁸ At a later date, Claudius (41-54 AD) ordered the legions to re-cross the Rhine.

Although the victories of Drusus and Germanicus brought Roman rule closer to Central Europe, and the Slavs from the northwest, Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD) reversed the defensive policy of containment by conquering the peoples beyond the Danube, to protect the Empire from any danger of a Germanic invasion.⁶⁹ A new province of Dacia, comprising of Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia, was formed — in other words, the Rumania of 1918-1940. It became the bulwark of Roman civilisation, protecting the Empire from attack by Germanic tribes established in what are now Slovakia, Moravia and Bohemia. Moreover, it was also a bulwark against the

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 16.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 17.

Sarmatians, the successors of the Scythians, who occupied the region between the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea.

It has been said that this was here that the Romans made a crucial mistake by not occupying the whole of the Danubian basin, and establishing the Carpathian Mountains as the Empire's frontier.⁷⁰ According to Dvornik's thesis, this would have involved subjugation of the Sarmatian Iazyges, who dwelt between the Tisza (Thiess) and the Danube. The Sarmatian Iazyges threatened both Dacia and Pannonia.

Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD) experienced in 162 AD an attack launched by the Chatti against the provinces of Raetia, and Germanis Superior. The Marcomanni and the Quadi, as noted above were established in modern Czechoslovakia, followed their initiative against the Romans. Marcus Aurelius had envisaged extending the Roman Empire as far as the natural boundary of the Carpathian Mountains, but he died on March the seventeenth 180 AD at Vindobona, the modern Vienna.⁷¹ Thus, it can be said, that the idea of using the above mountain ranges as a natural defensive barrier was a manifestations of geo-politics in the early period.

In brief, the Romans failed to establish direct contact with the Slavs. There are remains of camps and forts in southern Slovakia and southern Moravia beneath the Castle of Trenchin at the foot of the Tatras, which informs the world that Roman legions had once camped there in about 179 AD.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 16.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 18.

⁷² Ibid. p. 19.

Hitherto now, this survey explores the Roman dimension of the early history of Europe. It will now examine the activities of the Slavonic and Germanic tribes during the 'Roman era'. While the Romans were trying to reach the Carpathians, the Slavs had been moving in the direction of the middle Dniester and Dnieper long before the Scythian invasion in 500 BC.⁷³ This slow population movement penetrated from the upper Vistula and upper Bug, which experienced a population growth, too large for the original home.⁷⁴ *Other tribes* were now appearing, in what is now southern Russia, *preceding the Slavs in their movement towards the Black Sea*.⁷⁵ (Emphases added). As Dvornik notes, a Germanic tribe known as the Bastarnae,

... left their primitive home between the fifth and third centuries B.C. and, accompanied or followed by other Germanic tribes, traversed the territory inhabited by Slavs, appearing about 230 B.C. on the lower Danube and the Black Sea.⁷⁶

The Goths, who originally inhabited south-eastern Sweden, moved to the shores of the Baltic and the lower Vistula in the first century of our era. 'After a prolonged stay', notes Dvornik, the Goths 'followed in the footsteps of the Slavs and the Bastarnae and reached the *borders* of the Roman Empire at the beginning of the third century'.⁷⁷ (Emphasis added).

It is not entirely clear what Dvornik means when he refers to the division of the Goths into other tribes, 'was probably effected after they had reached the Black Sea'.⁷⁸ In any event, for present purposes it is interesting to note that this division, that is,

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Visigoths (*Tervinngi*, *Wise*, called also *West Goths*) and Ostrogoths (*Greutingi*, *Brilliant*, called also *East Goths*), provides yet another illustration of differentiation, and its addition to the nomenclature of identities.⁷⁹

The geo-political consideration noted already above can be expanded further. In other words, this steady migration of primitive tribes towards the lower Danube and the Black Sea can be attributed to the waterways of the Russian plains, which also made commercial exchanges possible.⁸⁰ The Romans had viewed the Carpathians as impenetrable by primitive peoples, and forgot the geographical features of the waterways, which were developed by the peoples of the interior of what is now Russia and those on the shores of the Baltic.⁸¹ However, the intermediaries in this trading activity were Greek colonists.

Greek colonisation of the shores of the Black Sea had begun as early as 700 BC. A series of trading posts set up by Greek merchants flourished into busy townships, from the mouth of the Dnieper to the Sea of Azov. Furthermore, a series of city-states flourished, one of them, Panticapaeum, providing 'the nucleus around which the so-called Bosporanian kingdom sprang up'.⁸²

It should be noted, however, that the Sarmatian influence was exerted on the Slavs before that of the Goths.⁸³ The Slavs, who had penetrated towards the Don and the Donets region, came under Sarmatian domination, and the sixth-century writers,

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 20.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 22.

Jordanes and Procopius, confirm this. According to Jordanes, the historian of the Goths, the Goths after defeating the Spali, a Sarmatian tribe, turned towards the Sea of Azov and penetrated into the Crimea in the second century of AD.⁸⁴

Moreover, the Spali supposedly belonged to the Alanic group of Sarmatians, whom Dvornik maintains, 'must be identified with the Speri or Speri mentioned by Procopius'.⁸⁵ Thus once again, there is a differentiation or categorisation of the tribal identities. But for now, it is noted here that for Procopius, all Slavs, meaning, only the Slavs that were known to him, were called Sporoi or Spori.⁸⁶ From this it can be concluded, 'that the Slavs in this region were, before the arrival of the Goths, controlled by the Alanic Spali'.⁸⁷

Dvornik finds additional evidence for this in the ancient language of the Slavs, the word for "giant" is *spolin* (Russian *ispolin*, Polish *stolin* or *stolim*), a word obviously derived from "Spali" — the giant, or master nation.⁸⁸ The Spali were defeated by the Goths, but it appears that the Samartians did not completely relinquish their control of the Slavs.

Moreover, Ptolemy was also aware of their existence in this area and at that time, was inhabited by Sarmatian tribes.⁸⁹ Remaining with Dvornik's study, who suggests that

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 22.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 23.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

‘if Pliny’s Anti could be identified with the Antês, their Slavonic origin should be excluded’.⁹⁰

He continues,

... it is possible that the Sarmatian “Anti” were settled in the basin of the Don and Donets as early as the second century of our era and that they then took over the leadership of the Slavs in that region.⁹¹

There is however, differing opinion about the Antês as a Slavonic tribe. Some regard the name as Iranian, and could in fact be Slavonic, and derived from the common Indo-European root as the name of the Veneti, Venedi.⁹² Dvornik claims: ‘it is quite admissible that an Iranian tribe and a Slavonic tribe bore similar names formed from a common root’.⁹³

Jordanes and Procopius do not provide extensive information about the Antês, but Jordanes does distinguish three groups of Slavs — the Venedi, the Scalvini and the Antês.⁹⁴ Jordanes had also noted that the Antês spoke the same language as the Slavs. Procopius confirms this statement, which, however strictly distinguishes them from the other Slavs, and this makes it is possible that both writers were unaware of a non-Slavonic origin of the Antês.⁹⁵

In any event, a strong Samartian political and cultural influence on the organisation of the Antic state cannot be excluded. As noted previously, the available literature on

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

this particular history lends itself to speculation. Hence, there is a sense that there is a need to be co-collaborators by suggesting that the Slavs, being governed by the Antês and the Samartian tribes were immediate neighbours and that some of them helped the Antês establish their political supremacy over other Slavonic tribes.⁹⁶ According to Dvornik's study, 'some of the names of prominent Antês mentioned by the Byzantine writer Procopius, Menander and Agathias seem to be Iranian'.⁹⁷ Thus, how can one deduce that the above are Iranian names, and on what philological basis? But, at the same time, and to be fair, one cannot discount the inevitable phenomenon of mass population movements, no matter what the cause. It can be said here, that this illustrates yet another instance of imprecise scholarship, and it is encountered again when rely on the following

In any case we can conclude from the statements of Jordanes and Procopius that, by the sixth century, the Byzantines regarded the Antês as Slavs. If there was an admixture of Iranian elements among the Antês, they were, at that period, already completely Slavonicized.⁹⁸

The Antês consolidated their position in the Don, Donets and middle Dnieper region, which is now Russia and suggests that,

If all this is true, and there are no serious reasons for rejecting these statements and suppositions, then the first attempt at organizing the Slavs in the present day Ukraine into a kind of State was made by a tribe which, even if Slavonic, was under strong Sarmatian influence.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 24.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

By the mid fourth-century, the Antês assumed the leadership of the opposition to the Goths. Ermanarich, the King of the Goths from 350 to 370 AD, before marching north to win his short lived Gothic empire, attacked and defeated the Antês, forcing them to submit to his rule.¹⁰⁰ The Slavs who did not belong to Antês and who were called Scлавini by Jordanes submitted only in part to the Goths, as they preferred to migrate north, settling in the region of the future Novogrod. Ermanarich also forced the Slavs of modern Poland — the Venedi of Jordanes, to accept his rule.¹⁰¹ His empire embraced all the Slavonic and German tribes, and some of the Finnish tribes living between the Baltic and the Black Sea.¹⁰² It is interesting to note that, ‘had this empire survived, the Goths and not the Scandinavians would have amalgamated the Eastern Slavs into a single political body, which would have been called *Gothia* instead of *Russia*.’¹⁰³

As it turned out, the Gothic empire did not last, as Ermanarich was attacked and defeated by the Huns — the first Asian invasion of Europe. The Huns were the masters of North China, but were attacked and defeated by the Avars, causing them to flee westwards, cutting through the Indo-European tribes and established themselves in southern Russia, when they launched their attack on the Goths.¹⁰⁴ In 370 AD, the Gothic empire was destroyed in a single battle. The new king, Vinitharius (Withimer), gathered the remnants of the Ostrogoths and other German tribes who had followed them and tried to retreat by way of the Dnieper to the old home of the Goths, but only to find that the Antês met them in battle. In the year 375 Vinitharius killed Boz, the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 25.

king of the Antês, all his sons, and seventy of his chiefs. But this massacre did not save Vinitharius. In the following year he was attacked and thoroughly beaten by the Huns, or precisely by the Sarmatian Alans, who formed an important contingent in the Hunnish tribes. After the Huns moved into modern Hungary, which became the centre of their empire under Attila (445-453), the Antês were faced with the challenge of maintaining their hold over the territory of the middle Dnieper and the Slavs inhabiting it. Moreover, the Antês moved their frontier to the lower Dniester and the lower Danube.¹⁰⁵

According to Dvornik, 'the invasion of the Huns was one of the most important events at the end of the ancient history'.¹⁰⁶ In brief, they overthrew the existing order in Central Europe, and their invasion had consequences, which would affect the Slavs either directly or indirectly, and influence the Slavs' history. It seems that this upheaval forced two other Sarmatian tribes, the Croats and the Serbs, to settle at the mouth of the Don. Greek inscriptions dating from the second and third centuries of our era substantiate that Sarmatians settled in this region and 'this provides the strongest argument that the Croats, or at least their ethnic name, were of Sarmatian origin'.¹⁰⁷

However, in trying to avoid the onslaught of the Huns, the Croats and the Serbs fled towards the northeast, and established themselves beyond the Carpathian Mountains

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 26.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

and gathered with the Slavonic tribes of Galicia, Silesia and the eastern part of Bohemia. Interestingly, this loose association of tribes formed a kind of a state.¹⁰⁸

At this point, this historical survey begins to identify the different ethnic groups, located within more precise geographical boundaries. There is sufficient evidence from the Byzantine writer Constantine Porphyrogenetus, that there existed a Croat State beyond the Carpathian Mountains called White Croatia. In some regions, the Serbs mixed with the Croats, especially on the Upper Vistula, but the bulk of them moved towards the northwest, imposing their rule on the Slavs between the Elbe and the Saale rivers, their state being called White Serbia. At this point one is able to locate the origins of the Sorbs for present purposes, with some confidence. In other words, *the remnants of the Lusatian Serbs (Sorbs) recall this name down to the present day.*¹⁰⁹ (Emphases added).

However, this historical survey remains incomplete. So far, it has traced the slow progress of Slav penetration into the part of Europe that was later to become Russia. However, it must be borne in mind that at the beginning of our era, the Slavs migrated through the Moravian Gates and the Carpathian Mountains. The first Slavonic penetration was sporadic, but a more systematic movement started in the third century. Roman writers, notably Ammianus Marcellinus, wrote that in about 334 AD, the Sarmatian Iazyges who are noted previously, resided in Hungary between the Danube and Tisza rivers since the second half of the first century, were defeated by their former subjects — the *servi Sarmatorum*. According to Peutinger, commenting

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

on Marcellinus, 'these could have been only the Venedi — Slavs — whom he calls the *Venedi Sarmatae*'.¹¹⁰

The Slavs, as Dvornik maintains, seem to have remained in Hungary during the Hunnish occupation of that country and this appears to be confirmed by Priscus, a member of the Byzantine embassy to the Huns in 448.¹¹¹ Moreover, Jordanes recorded some linguistic features, such as the words "medos", a liqueur and "strava", a Slav word for a burial feast, were adopted by the Huns.

There is no evidence that the Slavs penetrated the Balkans proper before 500 AD, but in the sixth century, along with the Huns, Bulgars and Avars, the Slavs found common cause with these tribes when they harassed the Byzantine frontiers¹¹². The destinies of the Western Slavs, however, are more complex.

As Stakhovsky explains'

At the beginning of the Christian Era, the whole expanse of northern Europe from the Rhine to the Vistula and from the Baltic, first to the Sudetens and later to the Danube, was occupied by Germanic tribes. From second to the fifth centuries A.D, certain important Germanic units moved out of the basin of the Elbe, the Oder, and their confluents, so that by the fourth century eastern Germany was almost totally evacuated by its Germanic inhabitants.¹¹³

The Slavs' occupation of Germany to the Oder and the Elbe is not confirmed until the sixth century. Procopius mentions for instance, that in 512 a detachment of North Germanic Eruli, after defeat by the Lombards in Hungary, made their way north to

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 29.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 30.

¹¹² Cross, S.H., in *A Handbook of Slavonic Studies*, Strakhovsky, L. (ed.) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 7.

¹¹³ Ibid. p. 10.

Denmark through the nations of the Sclaveni.¹¹⁴ Moreover, Vibius Sequester, a sixth century geographer specifically mentions according to Stakhovsky's study, that the Elbe served as the crude border between German and Slav, and Einhard, writing in the eighth century, names the Saale as the frontier between the Thuringians and the Slavs.¹¹⁵

Moreover, it is noted by Dvornik that Sequester 'describes the Elbe as the frontier between the Germans — "the Svabians" — and the Slavs — "the Cervelli" — evidently the Sorabs or *Sorbs* (Serbs)'.¹¹⁶ Interestingly, the Slavs pushed towards the North Sea and also to the west and south, occupying the cities of Hamburg, Lüneburg, Magdeburg, Erfurt and Gotha, advancing as far as the river Saale.

Thus, the Slavs who settled between the Saale (Solava) and the Spree (Spreva), that is, the Sorbians (Sorabians, Serbians), the Milcani (who were in the vicinity of modern Bautzen), and the Luzici in Lower Lusatia, forced the Germanic Thuringians to move further west.¹¹⁷ The northern neighbours of the Sorbians were the Vilci (Veletians), whom Ptolemy located on the lower Vistula, and also known as the Ljutici, had travelled as far as the Elbe. They occupied the territory between the Elbe and the Varnava. In brief, the modern Mecklenburg was held by the Obodrites, Holstein by the Vagrians and Lüneburg by the Dreviane.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the Pomeranians settled around the Baltic Coast, from the mouth of the Oder to the mouth

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Dvornik, F., *The Slavs*, op. cit. pp. 32-33.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 33.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

of the Vistula, 'who formed at the same time a transition between all these tribes, the Polabians, the Baltic Slavs and the Poles'.¹¹⁹

The Slavs took *final* possession of Bohemia and Moravia, while other Slavonic tribes closely akin to them moved into modern Slovakia as far as the Danube. Slavs from Moravia also pushed towards the Danube, crossed it and moved into Hungary as far as Lake Balaton (Blatno).¹²⁰

About the middle of the sixth century, the appearance of new Asiatic invaders, known as the Altaic Avars, established themselves in the Danubian basin. Instead of becoming federates of the Byzantine Empire, the Slavs became federates of the Avars. Dvornik suggests that some Slavonic tribes, especially those in Bohemia, in Poland and the Elbe, 'must have joined the Avars voluntarily, when they battled with the Franks on the Elbe in 561- 562 and in 566 - 567'.¹²¹ Other Slavonic tribes located in Wallachia and Pannonia, Noricum and Illyricum, Moravia and Slovakia acknowledged the supremacy of the Avars. The Antês were the only source of opposition. Contemporary sources indicate that the Antês collaborated with the Byzantines in order to thwart attacks from Asia. The Khagan Apsich was forced to wage a special campaign against the Antês in 602 AD, in what is now known as Bessarabia. Their defeat marked the end of the 'first would-be Slav empire and the name Antês disappears completely from history'.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 34.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 38.

¹²² Ibid.

This survey of the Slavonic peoples at this point is beginning to take shape in that it is possible to identify their regional destinations, and the consequent or inevitable formation of the respective ethnic identities or groupings. This loose notion of an evolutionary process of regional identities was supplemented by the fact that, by not only just adopting the military tactics of the Avars, the Slavs firmly established themselves as settlements in the conquered territories. For instance, there is evidence to show that the Slavs first made a settlement on Greek soil in 581. Moreover, during the reign of Emperor Maurice (582-602), the city of Strimium (in modern Croatia) was forced to capitulate to the Avars and their Slavonic auxiliaries. The Slavs had penetrated as far as the Peloponnesus by 578 AD, and Slavonic colonies were strengthened by the arrival of new tribes after 587. Between 587 and 589, Slavonic colonies were further strengthened, with cities such as Thebes, Demetrias and Athens having to endure Slavonic occupation. Even Thessalonica narrowly escaped a combined force of Avars and Slavs in 597.

However during this period, the eastern part of the Roman Empire had to deal with new invasions, being already weakened by Germanic invasions, it had to face the new enemy in the east — the Persians. Priscus and Peter were two generals whom Emperor Maurice could only send against the Slavs and the Avars after defeating this enemy. After the Avars and the Slavs across the Danube suffered several defeats by the Roman armies, the Avars made peace, ‘and for the last time in history the frontier between the Empire and the newcomers was fixed on the Danube’.¹²³ The situation became critical again during the reign of Emperor Phocas (602 - 610), when the Slovenes, who had been established in Pannonia and Noricum, began to push towards

¹²³ Ibid. p. 41.

the Adriatic. In brief, numerous Slavonic tribes in the seventh century occupied the whole of Dalmatia to the rivers Sava and Danube, while the remaining parts of the Balkans were completely transformed by the Slavs. Slav settlements, such as those of the Narentans (Neretvans) were to be found on the Adriatic coast between the river Narenta (Neretvan) and Cetinje. The Narentans, considered being the most important of these tribes, which settled on the rivers Lim, Drina, Piva, Tara, Ibar, Morava and the Adriatic shores of the Dukliane, the Travuniane, the Konavliane and the Zachluniane.¹²⁴

Moreover, the Roman provinces of Moesia, Dacia, Dardania and Macedonia, were entirely occupied by the Slavs. Some Slavonic settlements were established in Thrace and Greece proper. It is of note here, that

All these Slavonic tribes which had established themselves in the whole of the territory from the Alps to the Adriatic, and to the Dobrujda on the Black Sea were very similar. *Their idioms, at the same stage of evolution, were in fact, dialects of the one common language.*¹²⁵ (Emphases added).

Moreover, as Dvornik notes, had they 'been able to find a common political centre, they would have formed one immense nation of which all branches would have spoken the same language'.¹²⁶ Interestingly, all these tribes called themselves Slovenes, which in Latin were transcribed as Sclavini, Sclavi, or Slavi. The Greeks called them Sklavenoi (Sthlavenoi) or Sklavoi. However, due to the different political and national evolutions of the Southern Slavs, only the Slovenes of today have retained the ancient name. The others, who were under the leadership of other tribes,

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 42.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

acquired the designations of those tribes, such as the Serbs, the Croats and the Bulgarians.

According to Dvornik who claims that,

The establishment of the Slavs in southern Europe was of the greatest importance for the evolution of Europe as a whole, and for that matter, for the history of mankind. The Slavs, unlike the Germans, took possession of these parts of the Roman Empire not as federates, but as conquerors.¹²⁷

2.3 The Destruction of Early Christianity

Those parts of the Roman Empire that experienced waves of Avar hordes and Slavs also saw the destruction of the monuments of the classical and early Christian period. Latin cities in Pannonia, Noricum, Illyricum and Dacia disappeared, just as the Greek cities in Dardania, Praevalis and Scythia. Christianity, 'which had been flourishing in those parts of the Empire ever since the fourth century, was almost completely uprooted'.¹²⁸ The vast region of the Roman Empire called Illyricum saw the fate of many Episcopal sees. One after another they disappeared during the years of Slavonic occupation, making this territory, pagan land once more.

All the provinces from the Alps to the Peloponnesus (except Thrace) came under the jurisdiction of the Roman See, which had established the 'metropolitan of Thessalonica as a spatial vicar for Illyricum'.¹²⁹ Moreover, in this region the Greek and Latin populations intermingled and lived together peacefully, thus forming a

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 44.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

bridge between the Latin West and the Greek East.¹³⁰ Dvornik argues that had the Avars and the Slavs destroyed not the Christian civilisation in Illyricum,

... the Western and the Eastern Churches would, by virtue of this "bridge" presumably have remained in contact and their evolution would never have proceeded in the contrary directions which they actually followed.¹³¹

A further consequence of this destruction of the bridge between the two Churches by the new occupants of Illyricum was that the Arabs gained control to a great extent over the Mediterranean Sea. This in turn, made the Byzantines increase their reliance on eastern provinces, especially those of Asia Minor, when they [the Byzantines] were threatened by the Persians and Arabs. In brief, 'A slow Orientalization of the Empire and of the Church was a natural consequence'.¹³²

In the western part of the Roman Empire, however, it lost many of its old Roman traditions and customs on account of Germanic invasions. Dvornik emphasises that there was great difficulty in communication between the Churches, and thus they could not share 'the new methods they devised for dealing with peoples so widely different'.¹³³ Moreover,

Only Illyricum could facilitate such intercourse and the de-Christianization of this province rendered that impossible. Thus Illyricum, instead of being a bridge between West and East, contributed most to the estrangement of the two Churches.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. pp. 44-45.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 45.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

2.4 Early linguistic differentiation

However, it should be borne in mind, that during this time, the Slavs were pagans. Moreover, there is a need to rely on philological investigations and archaeological discoveries in order to make some conclusions about early Slavonic civilisation. Slavonic philologists, using the comparative method, have established that until the end of the first millenium, the differences between Slavonic dialects were negligible.¹³⁵ Dvornik notes, that ‘a study of the words used by the different Slavonic groups in pagan religious worship also reveals considerable uniformity’.¹³⁶ Furthermore, a comparison of the Slavonic religious vocabulary with that of other Indo-European peoples discloses a rather striking similarity with the Indo-Iranian nomenclature.¹³⁷ However, the Indo-European languages ‘display in general marked differences in development’, and thus it is difficult to say when this similarity of Slavonic and Iranian religious conceptions was achieved.¹³⁸ But, since some of this vocabulary is also found in the Baltic languages, the evidence suggests that this evolution started in prehistoric times when the Balts and the Slavs formed one linguistic group.¹³⁹

The significance of philological findings will be further discussed in Chapter Three. For present purposes one needs to return to a historical survey of the Lusatian region. In order to do this there is a need to focus on the regions of modern day Brandenburg and Saxony.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 47.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

2.5 Charlemagne in Brandenburg and Saxony

Although there may have been a major movement of Saxons into Britain and to a lesser degree into the north of what was becoming Francia, a number of Saxons remained east of the Rhine, to become subjects of the Frankish monarchy of Theuderic I (c.511-533) and his son Theudebert I (533-48).¹⁴⁰ Frankish hegemony was maintained and in 612 'the Saxons were expected to defend the north-eastern frontier against attacks by the Wends, a Slavonic people'.¹⁴¹ The Saxons, as Collins notes, were not culturally dissimilar to the Franks, but 'the principal difference between the Franks and the Saxons was in religion, as the latter remained firmly pagan'.¹⁴²

In the early eighth century Saxon raids on the lands of a minor Frankish people known as the Chaturarii in 715, were serious enough for Charles Martel to target 'Saxonia', the land of the Saxons. Charles emerged victorious from this conflict after invading Saxony in both 718 and 720. The Saxons terminated the campaign of 747 by agreeing to pay tribute to the Franks something, which had dated back to the sixth century during the time of Chlothar. However, according to Collins, there was some expansion or movement, as well as a growth in population among the Saxons in an area north of the Lippe, which may have been 'influenced by pressures from the north from the Frisians and from the east on the part of the Wends'.¹⁴³ Moreover, it seems that both of these peoples were easily persuaded to join the Franks against the Saxons in 747.

¹⁴⁰ Collins, R., *Charlemagne*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 44.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.* pp. 44 -45.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 45.

The early phase of the Saxon wars had seen Charles and his armies campaigning both eastwards and northwards as far as the valley of the Elbe. In 804, in the second period of the war, various groups of Slavs to the east of the Saxons, particularly the Abodrites, became part of the Franks' endeavours. Charles chose a certain Thrasco to serve as king of the Abodrites, and made them a gift of the lands once occupied by the Saxons across the Elbe.¹⁴⁴ As Collins suggests, this would imply that Charles had no intention at this point to extend direct Frankish rule across the Elbe, but rather preferred 'to work through a compliant Slav ruler of his choosing'.¹⁴⁵ It is uncertain as to whether this special relationship with the Abodrites was intended to convert them. No attempts to evangelise the Slavs seem to have been made during Charles's reign, but in a letter of Alcuin to an unnamed abbot that was probably written in 789, that the hope then existed that the process of converting the Saxons might be extended both to the Danes, and to the Slavonic Wiltzi and Wends.¹⁴⁶

In order to protect newly conquered territories, Charlemagne founded several marches on the borders of his empire. Against the Sorabians, settled between the Saale and the Elbe, in modern Saxony, he created the Thuringian March, called the *Limes Sorabicus*. In brief, the consolidation of Frankish power on the west bank of the Elbe by the Carolingian dynasty had arrested the westward push of other Germanic tribes, but at the same time this consolidated the Germanic forces and stopped any Slavonic advance to the west of the that river.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, this initiative of the Franks not only

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 164.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 164 -166.

¹⁴⁷ Dvornik, F., *The Slavs*, op. cit. p. 73.

halted the Germanic push westward, but also made the Germans seek room for expansion on the east.¹⁴⁸

Although the Christianising of the Saxons by the Franks was a bloody struggle in the last decades of the eighth century, it is interesting to note that during the ninth century the Episcopal sees of Osnabrück, Verden, Bremen, Paderborn, Minden, Halberstadt, Hildesheim and Münster in Saxony, were to become important bulwarks against the pagan Slavs as well as significant locations for German *political* and *cultural influence over the Slavs* beyond the Elbe, and beyond the Böhmerwald and the Danube.¹⁴⁹ (Emphases added). In other words, the above cities or towns became bishoprics during a period under the rule of the emperor Louis I, who appointed a Saxon noble Liudolf as margrave to defend the *Limes Saxoniae* in about 850.¹⁵⁰

Thus the Carolingian Empire was to influence the evolution of the nations and tribes with which it came into contact. During Charlemagne's reign, the Empire was consolidated, reorganised and it was heir to the Roman Empire in the West. Conquest was directed against nations and states that could offer the least resistance, and these were the Slavs in the northeastern, central and southeastern Europe.

On the basis of the above evidence, it can be said that geography and movement of peoples have determined the regions where Slav and German have come into contact and conflict with each other. In brief, it can be said that 'from the eighth to the early twelfth [century], German tribes sought to Germanize and Christianize the various

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 74.

¹⁵⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (author not cited), Volume 20 in 24 volumes, (Chicago: William Benson Publisher, 1965), p. 33.

Slavonic tribes along the Oder, Saale, and the Elbe rivers'.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, Thomson summarises these conflicts in the following passage.

The first serious attempt to conquer a Slavonic tribe was the campaign of the Saxon duke Otto the Illustrious (d. 927) in the last year of the ninth century. His son, Henry the Fowler, carried the work further; in the winter of 928-929 he conquered the Wiltzi, in 931 subdued the Abodrites, the next year the Milciani in Lusatia, and in 934 he was in the Uckermark "cum exercitu". By this latter year the more powerful Slavonic tribes along the Elbe-Saale front had been forced to bow to German military might. But the Slavs were still for the most part pagans, and the German church was anxious for their conversion to Christianity.¹⁵²

In 929, Henry the Lion took Jahna, the Sorb capital, and gave orders to kill the whole adult population. The children were put into slavery and one hundred and twenty thousand men and women are said to have died, and all the prisoners beheaded.¹⁵³ As Thomson maintains, 'the hatred engendered by this exchange of brutalities has not been allowed to die down since'.¹⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that the Slavs, still pagans, would hesitate to convert to their Christian oppressors.

Moreover, it is suggested here, that it is this kind of history that forms a part of people's collective memory, which in turn impinges on their collective psyche, and this together with a number of other cultural markers, compose or construct the notion of an *identity*. There are periods in the history of a people referred to as a 'golden age' or times of prosperity, as well the oppressive periods marked by death and

¹⁵¹ Thomson, H. S., cited in *Handbook of Slavonic Studies*, op.cit. p. 140.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 143.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. It needs to be said here, that this scale of killing in present times would amount to nothing other than a war crime, crimes against humanity, and genocide. In terms of contemporary endeavours in attempting to realise norms in international law and justice, it would be deemed as case of *jus cogens*, which is an offence against humanity so grievous, which is supposed to be a universally recognised crime that should carry universal jurisdiction. However, this is not to say that the above is a sole illustration of a wider theoretical framework. The point is that whilst such tragedies in human history occur, there are other sinister activities that take place in most arenas of ethnic conflict, which are then imbedded in a collective memory.

destruction. Such 'sacrificial' events as described above, together with territory (a homeland), language, religion, to name but few, can be referred to as the components that when they become an aggregate of 'raw materials' (or components) they are defined as being that ethnic group's *mythomoteur*. In brief, the empirical foundations here that are an intrinsic part in a case history approach and for later analysis in this study, can be referred to as being under the broad rubric of 'ethnic politics'.

2.6 The role of Brandenburg and antagonisms with the Slavs

There was a Slavonic revolt in 983, led by Mestivoj, a prince of the Orbodrites, who razed Hamburg, Havelburg and Brandenburg, burnt churches and martyred many German clerics. It was a process of de-germanising the land. Brandenburg is significant here for present purposes, as it should be borne that Cottbus, a *Sorb centre*, is in the region of modern Brandenburg. The history of Brandenburg will be further discussed later in this chapter.

In any event, the Germans reorganised themselves and rebuilt the churches, and a large number of German merchants and artisans came into the Slavonic lands in large numbers.¹⁵⁵ But, the issue of German superiority was not decided as a second Slavonic revolt in 1018, and another in 1068 lasted until 1093.¹⁵⁶

Henry I, the Fowler extended the Saxon frontier almost to the Oder. Henry's son, Otto the Great, was crowned an emperor in 962, 'and his descendants held this dignity until the death of the emperor Otto III in 1002'.¹⁵⁷ Under this dynasty the Slavs were driven

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 144.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit, p. 33.

back and in 968 an archbishopric was founded at Magdeburg for the lands east of the Elbe. The demands of administering of Otto the Great's dominions compelled him to delegate much of his authority in Saxony to a trusted relative, Hermann Billung. After Billung's death in 973, he was succeeded by his son Bernard I, who was undoubtedly the duke of Saxony in 986. His son Bernard II, who was hostile towards the German kings, Conrad II and Henry III, succeeded Bernard.¹⁵⁸ During the century that followed Billung's death there had been constant warfare with the Slavs, and this pattern continued after Henry V bestowed the duchy upon Lothair count of Supplinburg, who 'persecuted the war against the Slavs with vigour' (in about 1115).¹⁵⁹ Henry IV's reign 'wrecked the stability of German politics and society, ... failed in his primary obligation to protect the Church' and in general terms, the years 1056 to 1250 marked a decline of the Empire.¹⁶⁰

However, Dobson notes that the eleventh and twelfth centuries were decisive in that they witnessed 'the transformation of the previously loosely knit aristocratic clans (*Grossfamilien*) into smaller, more durable and more closely integrated dynasties'.¹⁶¹

The detailed nomenclature or lineage and inter-marriage of the Saxon nobility need not be a distraction here. But the following event paves the way for an introduction to the discussion below. Interestingly, in about 1260, after the death of Albert I, his two sons divided his territories. John, the elder brother took Lauenburg what was sometimes known as lower Saxony, and the other, Albert II took Wittenburg or upper

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 34.

¹⁶⁰ Dobson, B., *Germany: A Companion to German Studies*, (London: Meuthen and Company Ltd, 1972), pp. 144-148.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 148.

Saxony. The Wittins gradually acquired power in Meissen and Lusatia and survived as lords of Saxony from 1423 to 1918.¹⁶² There are however, some observations and consequent assumptions that can be made here.

2.7 Some early theoretical blueprints

The first point to be made is that the Slavs that are referred to in the literature are among the ancestors of the Sorbs (Wends) of today. Notwithstanding this identification of an ethnic group, it remains within a context of overlapping territories; that is Slavonic (Sorb) and German. Thus, one can safely begin to exclude the Slavonic tribes of immediate neighbouring lands, such as the Czechs, Slovenes, Bulgars, or those that are recognisably outside the border of today's Germany. Second, whilst the differentiation of territories into 'upper' and 'lower' regions is not altogether rare (Upper and Lower Silesia is another instance), these distinctions are usually accompanied by linguistic variations. Third, it witnesses among the earliest manifestations of ethnic conflict. (For present purposes, it refers to the warring German and Saxon populations, using historical or empirical data). By the same token, it is not intended here to set an arbitrary date as the beginning of ethnic conflict. The fourth observation is, that conflict and acquisition of territories was partly driven by ecclesiastical or ideological interests, that is Christianity, no matter how crude a form it took in what may be regarded as political considerations.

2.8 Brandenburg's continued influence

Brandenburg was a district inhabited in ancient times by the Semnones and afterward by various Slav tribes, which were partially subdued by Charlemagne but soon

¹⁶² Ibid.

regained their independence. In the tenth century, the emperor Henry I the Fowler defeated the Havelli and 928 took their capital, Branibor, from which the name “Brandenburg” is derived.¹⁶³ Gero, margrave of the Saxon East Mark (Ostmark), waged a campaign against the Slavs, while the emperor Otto I founded bishoprics at Havelburg and Brandenburg. The Slavs regained much of their territory after Otto’s death in 973, including Brandenburg.

Lothair, who became duke of Saxony, was aided by Albert I the Bear in renewed attacks on the Slavs, with the latter becoming emperor in 1133. Albert made a treaty with Pribislav, the childless ruler of Havelland in about 1140. The rule for the next hundred years under the Ascanians, as Albert’s descendants were called, saw his great-grandsons John I and Otto III establish a front along the Oder river, together with the acquisitions of new territories and the founding of Frankfurt an der Oder (not to be confused with Frankfurt am Main, which is much further west). In the same year of the founding of Frankfurt in 1253, Otto III’s marriage with Beatrice, the daughter of Wenceslas of Bohemia, added upper *Lusatia* to the margrave’s domain. A consequence of this period of prosperity which is of note here, is that

The Slav population between the Elbe and the Oder was, on the whole, not displaced but gradually *assimilated* in *language* and in the way of life to the *economically* and *politically* superior newcomers. Brandenburg’s prosperity in the 13th century formed a marked contrast with the political disintegration that prevailed in western Germany.¹⁶⁴ (Emphases added).

According to Thompson, however, Albert the Bear

¹⁶³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 4, op. cit. p. 97.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 98.

... had wisely held aloof as much as he could from participation in the Wendish Crusade of 1147, so that the broken fragments of the pagan Slavs looked upon him with not an unfriendly eye...¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, in 1147, the Christian Chieftain in Brandenburg died without heirs and left his territory to Albert, thus allowing the German extension over Brandenburg to occur 'without friction'.¹⁶⁶ Albert's tactful policy towards the Wends is further noted by Thompson, as Albert 'reconciled the Wends in his domains to German domination', by using a 'liberal land policy [that] induced heavy immigration by settlers from regions farther west'.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, as Thompson maintains, Brandenburg and Pomerania were under the ministry of Otto of Bamberg (1124-25, 1128-29) who 'peacefully paved the way for the extension of German rule, are the only two Wendish lands not acquired at the price of bloodshed in the twelfth century'.¹⁶⁸ The claim that before Albert's death this region was sparsely populated with a mixture of Wendish and German peoples, but later prospered, coincides with the above encyclopaedic citation.

On Otto III's death, however, the margravian territory was divided between his family and his brother's, which created conflict between the margraves, so much that Otto IV's nephew and successor, Woldemar conquered Pomerellen (eastern Pomorze — a Polish domain), on the western bank of the Vistula, and partitioned with the Teutonic Order in 1310. In brief, Woldemar came to rule over the *whole of upper and lower Lusatia*, and various outlying regions.

¹⁶⁵ Thompson, J.W., *Feudal Germany*, Volume 2 in 2 volumes, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1928), p. 518.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

It is of note however, that Helm makes a stark but also a contrasting assertion in,

An analogy between the two frontiers, though so far removed in time and place from each other, is not a fanciful one. The greed of the Americans for the lands of the Indians, and the intolerance of the Saxons toward the Wends [sic]. The history of the Cherokees has its prototype in medieval Germany.¹⁶⁹

In brief, Thompson's analysis continues with the aforementioned analogy by comparing the protest of a nameless Abodrite chief against the erection of the *castellum* of Sigeberg reminds one of the 'harangue of that Delaware chief recorded by Heckewelder. Niklot's reply to Adolph of Holstein is like that of a friendly Indian chief whose friendship has been betrayed'.¹⁷⁰ Although the parallels between the border history of medieval Germany and that of America are not absolute, they are relative comparisons in establishing a case history study of the Sorbs. In order to complete our present analysis, what amounted to German eastward expansion, or colonisation was punctuated by Albert the Bear's acquiring Brandenburg in 1134, and Henry the Lion's acquisition of Lübeck in 1158. In brief, this German eastward expansion (*Drang nach Osten*) firmly established the foundations of a permanent ecclesiastical and political system.

As a matter for consideration in terms of racial mixture and diversity, or heterogeneity, it ought to be noted that there was also Frisian and Flemish colonisation during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Again it is noted, that certain theoretical discourse in Chapter One, is reflected in this instance as a case of the political and cultural domination of the those who are colonised, which may include

¹⁶⁹ Helm, I., cited in Thompson, J.W., *Feudal Germany*, op. cit. p. 524.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 524-525.

linguistic change, such as hybrid variations that may be shared or dialectical, extinction, suppression or assimilation which is manifested the above historical narrative.

In any event, for the Frisian and Flemish peasantry who had experienced adverse conditions Lower Germany beckoned as,

... thousands of them trekked eastward filled with new energy and fresh hope.... to find new economic and political freedom in a land where the population was sparse, land cheap, and little or no capital necessary to begin with.¹⁷¹

However, the Flemish and Frisian settlers did not come into these regions until subjugation or expulsion of the Wendish people there had been accomplished by Saxon coercion. At the same time, it should be noted that this was a slow increase in population, and before the immigration of Dutch and the Flemings, the German peasantry knew little or nothing of the process to make marshes and swamp lands arable.¹⁷² Moreover, lay and clerical proprietors induced the abbots and princes of Germany to bring in colonies of Dutch and Flemings. Within a space of a hundred years, the whole valley of the Elbe from Meissen to Hamburg to the banks of the Oder below Breslau (now Wroclaw, in Polish Silesia), were peopled with these Dutch and Flemish settlers. As Thompson also notes, these groups of Flemish settlers in Germany may be divided into two broad categories: those founded by the church and those founded by German nobles.¹⁷³ Furthermore,

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 552.

¹⁷² Ibid. p. 554.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

Among the first group we find the colonies established around Bremen, in Holstein, at Wilster, Stoer, and Elmshorn in Thuringia, in the Goldene Aue, at Erfurt, Naumburg, near Meissen, in Analt, in the archbishopric of Magdeburg, in lower *Lausitz* and Silesia. In the second group are included the Flemish settlements at Bitterfeld, Jüterbock, in Waggia, Brandenburg, Uckermark, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, the circle of Leubus, and in Austria and Hungary.¹⁷⁴ (Emphasis added).

But as Thompson cautions, that ‘numbers of these Flemish and Frisian colonies in Germany evidently were not composed of the original lowlanders, but were offshoots of the mother-group’.¹⁷⁵ Thus, again one is faced with some difficulty in locating a homogenous population (the Wends) within a specific or finite territory.

2.9 The Later Middle Ages 1250 to 1493 and difficulties in historical precision

It has been noted above that the use of the term ‘Slavs’ has the potential to be erroneous if one were to rely on the available discourse. But if any attempt is made to distil an historical narrative into an account of Sorbian history for the purposes of this study, and then one must persevere with close scrutiny of Slavonic activities. For instance, there is a difficulty when Dobson refers to a certain German population’s willingness ‘to settle in the Slav lands across the Elbe’, and this as being ‘perhaps the sensational development in medieval German history, the colonization of the north-east’.¹⁷⁶ Thus, it is quite possible that these ‘Slav lands’ east of the Elbe may be more specifically Polish, or a mixture of Polish and Sorbian peoples. But, on the ‘balance of probabilities’ where the available literature either omits, or fails to specify the ethnic identity of a Slavonic group inhabiting the lands between the rivers Elbe and the Oder, one can assume here that it is in fact a historical survey of the Sorbs (Wends).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p.555.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 556-557.

¹⁷⁶ Dobson, B., *Germany: A Companion to German Studies*, op. cit. p. 159.

2.10 The Early Habsburgs and the influence of Bohemia

In any event, to return to the present investigation, by noting that the period from 1254-73, is sometimes referred to as the 'Great Interregnum, during which 'political centrifugalism made the German prelates and magnates' more interested in maintaining the ideal of a supra-territorial Reich.¹⁷⁷ In brief, the coronation of Rudolf, Count of Habsburg in 1273 heralded a new era in the Reich. It is said that one of the new king's greatest achievements was his relentless campaign against Ottokar, the Slav king of Bohemia and ruler of Austria, Styria, Carinthia and Carniola.¹⁷⁸ The Habsburg lordship of Austria remained one of the few fixed points of the ever-changing German political landscape until November 1918. But the early Habsburgs failed to make the empire hereditary in their own house.

However, in 1323, the German king Louis IV, the first medieval king from the house of Wittelsbach became involved in a long struggle with the papacy. Despite Louis's triumph against the papacy, the unity of the Empire was short lived. Internal jealousies and antagonisms within Germany reappeared, as the Bavarian's dynastic ambitions antagonised the Luxemburg faction, which had a new leader in Charles of Bohemia.¹⁷⁹ Louis died in 1347, after which Germany experienced relative peace, as Charles could attend to the interests of his dynasty. His father had already acquired Silesia, and now Charles added new territories, such as Egerland, Oberpfalz, Lusatia, Schweidnitz and Brandenburg. Thus in brief, the Sorbs found themselves under Bohemian influence, if not domination.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 163.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 164 -166.

¹⁷⁹ Rodes, J.E., *Germany: A History*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 71.

However, the period from 1378 to 1410 was a time of political chaos for most of Europe. But at the same time it witnessed the trend of German territories being transformed into *Ständestaaten* [sic]. This meant that states were based on estates, and relationships among people were no longer based on individual feudal arrangements. The various strata making up a society, such as the nobility, clergy, bourgeoisie, and sometimes the peasants, were treated as groups or estates, coupled with the establishment of a civil service.¹⁸⁰

Another feature that is noted in this period is the growth of territorialism. In other words, territory was acquired by not only the king or princes, but also territorial lords, nobles, margraves, bishops, 'and all sorts of lesser nobles, as the atomization of the German Kingdom increased'.¹⁸¹ Moreover, at about this time, the Teutonic Knights had reached the peak of their power marked by the additional conquest West Prussia, Danzig, and the mouth of the Vistula, all of which belonged to Poland.

Interestingly the Knights, as Rodes suggests, developed a system of efficient administration and civil service, which in some respects were the antecedents of later Prussian governmental ideas.¹⁸² Furthermore, unaided by the German Kingdom the Teutonic Knights exerted influence, gained political infiltration and laid the groundwork for Germany's *Ostpolitik*, or eastern policy, for centuries to come.¹⁸³ For present purposes, what needs to be noted is that the Order retained a colonial

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 74 -75.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 76.

¹⁸² Ibid. p. 79.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

character, with the native peoples keeping their *identity*, but remaining antagonistic to their conquerors, and readily resorting to rebellions.

2.11 Governance in the Latter Middle Ages

The twelfth century saw the enlargement of old towns and the foundation of new ones, so that by the end of the thirteenth century the number of German towns increased ten-fold.¹⁸⁴ In 1475 for instance, Cologne was the largest with some 30,000 inhabitants, and those with more than 20,000, were Lübeck, Danzig and Hamburg in the north and, Strassburg, Ulm and Nuremburg in the south.¹⁸⁵ Du Boulay proposes that the criteria of what comprised of a German medieval town consisted of ‘both an economic function and a constitutional one based upon possession of a town law’.¹⁸⁶ In brief, towns were, and still are, fundamentally the creations of economic activity. Trade flourished through a network of internal arterial routes stretching from the Baltic, along the Rhine and over the Alps into Italy and the Danube flowing into southeastern Germany, Austria, and Hungary and beyond.

In the older towns during the thirteenth century, there was a close connection between town and the *Burg*, whether they were bishoprics or royal palaces. Some towns had no *Burg*, so the city itself would be fortified. Some settlements had amalgamated to form a single town, while ‘suburbs and dependent little towns were often created by charters which styled them *Weichbilder* [outskirts] or places of freedom (*Freiheit*) where the inhabitants might freely hold and inherit their property, possess jurisdiction

¹⁸⁴ Du Boulay, F.R.H., *Germany in the Later Middle Ages*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), p. 115.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

and practise trade ...[sic] ‘.¹⁸⁷ This type of arrangement in the towns influenced the political and social life in that there were two kinds groups that held power. First there were towns deliberately founded by lords, and second, merchants gradually formed a community which ‘derived its first strength and protection from a Roman or ecclesiastical lordship, but later struggled for its mercantile independence’.¹⁸⁸

As colonisation moved eastwards, Du Boulay suggests that ‘chains of towns’ may have been deliberately founded along routes, but where secondary colonisation was taking place, that is, with immigrant settlers, those territories took on a political and economic form.¹⁸⁹ In other words, towns were either built or acquired by lords with not necessarily a direct economic intention (market and long-distance trade), but also for ‘the furthering of seignorial administration and the territory’s defence’.¹⁹⁰

Moreover, princes founded towns in regions that were politically fragmented as a result of partial inheritances, private wars or marriage settlements. In any event, these towns were often linked with seignorial castles and their *ministriales* on the peripheries of the estates, which during the Wittelsbach dynasty for instance, became points of military and administrative centres.¹⁹¹

Furthermore, administrative functions were no longer exclusively concerned with the agrarian ‘sector’, but took on a political self-awareness. By the mid thirteenth century, the town economies were allowing power to pass into the hands of the burghers in the

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 116-117.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 117.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 119.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 120.

form of town councils (the *Rat*). Rudolf of Habsburg for instance, gave towns privileges, but in return he asked for political support, thus making towns 'political entities which could support or damage the king's own policies'.¹⁹² However, there was still a gap between early medieval overlordship and late medieval autonomy. In brief, not all towns that belonged to a king, were or became imperial towns and even royal towns were subject to the monarch's detailed dominion. In the fourteenth century in some places such as Goslar, the citizens swore an oath of allegiance to the king, 'emperor of the holy empire'.¹⁹³

However in time, most of the offices and ceremonies of subjection to the king lost their meaning or became mere formalities, as to be an imperial city it meant to be free from all extraneous lordship. In these instances, the city council (*Rat*) under its mayor (*Bürgermeister*) became the supreme body and took over the functions that were formerly exercised by the imperial steward (*Vogt*) and his subordinate judges (*Schultheiss and Richter*). It was in the mid-fourteenth century that the first *Reichstag* (parliament) became a concept which reigned over every inhabitant and all residents came to be known as *Untertanen*, 'which means 'subjects' and denotes a modern political concept, instead of the usual variety of medieval names for status like burgess, citizen, vassal, tenant and so on'.¹⁹⁴ This system of governance evolved into an arrangement whereby most small or medium sized German towns became a part of a province. Only a few towns such as Nuremburg and Lübeck attained a degree of self-rule. The towns' political importance lay in the relationships between them and the princes, where the former may have 'assisted in state-building while preserving

¹⁹² Ibid. p. 121.

¹⁹³ Ibid. p. 125.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 127.

their own peace and profitability'.¹⁹⁵ Thus, two broad avenues of development were open to provincial towns in their political life,

... [e]ither they acquired a certain degree of independence from their lord and lived their own economic lives with more or less help from the nobility, to the advantage of each side; or else they were firmly worked into the princely polity on the prince's terms.¹⁹⁶

As an example of the first, Du Boulay notes that in the fourteenth century Meissen and Lusatia, which lay north of Bohemia, were still in a stage of colonisation by Germanic people.¹⁹⁷ In other words, the lords had a good understanding of the need for not only defensive walls around their towns, thus expressing an act being territorial, but they also understood that economic development of their towns would rebound to their own advantage. In brief, the lord got the money; the town got the right to exercise judicial power over its citizens and sometimes even over people outside the town boundaries.¹⁹⁸ The king of Bohemia used the towns against the *Raubritter* who were disturbing the peace when he acquired Lusatia. Lusatia, like Silesia 'became a region of town-lord co-operation, largely under the Luxemburgs, and to the benefit of all'.¹⁹⁹

Two important political concepts emerge here, if one subscribes to Du Boulay's investigation. On the one hand, it seems that the concept of *colonisation* is firmly

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 127-128.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 128.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. Du Boulay omits to give a translation of the word *Raubritter* here. The closest translation that can be offered here is made up from two words, *Raub* (over-exploitation) and *Ritter* (knight), to form the compound word *Raubritter*. Moreover, *The Oxford Duden German Dictionary*, Scholze-Stubenrecht, W., and Sykes, J.B., (eds.), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), does not have an entry for the term *Raubritter*.

entrenched during this period, if not in the specific regions noted above. Colonisation has the defining characteristic of exploitation. However on the other hand, Du Boulay notes that,

No single interest seems to have been wholly dominant, not duke, knightly family nor any closed circle of upper burghers, which was notably absent. The trade of the river [Danube] was paramount, and shared in by many [sic].²⁰⁰

On the basis of the available evidence, the above arrangement seems to resonate with the concept of *pluralism*, even though it may be an embryonic manifestation.²⁰¹ But, it needs to be stated that one cannot be sure if this experience prevailed in Lusatia, which in turn lends itself to a *theoretical tension* at such an early stage of this enterprise. In other words, how can one conceptually (if not pragmatically) reconcile colonialism and pluralism?

2.12 The peasantry

A census in 1788 showed that 'rural and urban plebs made up the mass of the population in every German state, but [that] the countryside produced by far the greatest number of people'.²⁰² The most common representative of this group was the peasant.

It may be useful here to note that variations in legal and economic status of the peasantry are extensive. Rather than viewing the peasantry in the context of a lower

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 129.

²⁰¹ For a definition of pluralism, see Connolly, W.E., in *Blackwell's Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1987, 1991), pp. 376-378.

²⁰² Benecke, G., *Society and Politics in Germany, 1500-1750*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 18-19.

social class, Benecke notes that ‘a peasant was a manager, a man in business with responsibility over land and livestock. To labourers, living-in servants and farmhands, to become a peasant was a grand desire’.²⁰³

However, Benecke is writing of the conditions in West Germany here, whereas, in the colonised east, the position had been initially better for the peasantry. He notes that from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, peasant colonists had been enticed east of the Elbe by farming contractors, *sculletti*, who offered tax- and rent-free years of farming.²⁰⁴ Once these contracts expired, the peasant had no residential rights whatsoever. Moreover, when large-scale farming became economically viable in the sixteenth century, the once privileged peasant became a rural wage-slave or *Robot*.²⁰⁵

However, as Benecke notes, there were exceptions in the German east, such as that found in the rulers of Saxony, who above all protected their peasants ‘against such economic degradation’ because they had no wish to see the bulk of their tax revenue disappear.²⁰⁶ The above resonates with Du Boulay’s assertion, in that as early as 1355 Charles IV ‘had forbidden the oppression of the peasants in his own territory of Lusatia, especially with taxes and unaccustomed dues’.²⁰⁷ Peasant-run agriculture was preserved with the aid of the ruler’s local officials and established a prevalent form of rural economic organisation in early modern East Germany, quite unlike to that found in the West.²⁰⁸ In brief however, the peasants had no political representation in territorial state assemblies (*Landtage*). Their landlords, the clergy, nobles and

²⁰³ Ibid. p. 19.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 20.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Du Boulay, F.R.H., *Germany in the Later Middle Ages*, op. cit. p. 184.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

burghers attended assemblies on behalf of their tenants. Thus from the above outline, one can begin to ascertain an approximate socio-economic structure that existed in Lusatia, thus affecting its inhabitants — the Sorbs. The significance of Lusatian peasantry will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.13 1410 and after: Slavonic victories and German defeats

During the reign of Charles IV, Poland was friendly in its relations with Germany and the Teutonic Order. But when the House of Bohemia failed to assume control over Poland, which then formed a coalition or the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Ladislas II of Poland defeated the Knights at Tannenburg in 1410. At the battle the Knights suffered at the hands of an army, which also comprised of Lithuanians and Russians. Rodes asserts that this marked the decline of the order, Germany thus ‘reached the demise of the Middle Ages.’²⁰⁹

Rather than establish an efficient centre of political power, the nobles ‘cemented the cornerstones for their political domination of the land, which was to last deep into the nineteenth century’.²¹⁰ In brief, Germany had reached an eastern orientation, due to the ruptures endured by the Teutonic Knights, the merchants, the Hapsburg and Bohemian dynasties.²¹¹ As Rodes concludes, Germany had shifted away from the West, ‘where she was forsaking her former spheres of influence west of the Rhine and south of the Alps’.²¹² The bourgeois driven by their wealth, secular and self-interests

²⁰⁹ Rodes, J.E., *Germany: A History*, op. cit. p. 81.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

and their 'thriving universities laid the groundwork for the social and religious upheaval of the approaching Reformation'.²¹³

However, the early part of the fifteenth century saw a strong Slavonic influence in some previous German territories, which can be attributed to the following events. For instance, one can suggest that Jan Huss (1369- 1415) became Bohemia's national martyr, when Sigismund, who claimed the Bohemian crown, allegedly murdered him. Thus, the Hussites vented their anger of Germany by staging an uprising in Prague in 1419. After a series of violent ruptures between religious factions known as the Calixtines (cup-users), the Utraquists and the Taborites, who rejected all forms of dogma and worship that lacked biblical authority. After the defeat of Frederick of Brandenburg by the Utraquists in 1433, later, in 1468 Matthias Corvinus occupied Moravia, Silesia and Lusatia.

The Second Peace of Thorn in 1466 saw western Prussia fall to Poland and it had to recognise the sovereignty of Poland, thus making Greater Poland stretch from the Baltic to the Black Sea under the reign of Casimir IV. Casmir's son, Vladimir became the king of Bohemia in 1471 and king of Hungary in 1490. In the following years the Jagiellonian state was encircled by the Habsburgs. However, by the early sixteenth century, for instance, during the years 1493 -1519, was an age of transition within the German Empire, as the Habsburgs through marriage and inheritance contracts with Hungary and Bohemia formed the basis for Habsburg world power. Interestingly,

²¹³ Ibid.

Lusatia fell outside the Imperial sphere, yet Kinder and Hilgemann place it within the Imperial boundary.²¹⁴

2.14 Consequences of the Reformation

A detailed study of the Reformation is beyond the scope of this study and needs no further rehearsal here. However, in the context of Lusatia, it is essential to examine certain events that contributed to the province's history. For instance, one can summarise some of the developments in this period by arguing that conditions of the agricultural sector became 'crystallised' until the early nineteenth century. In other words, the peasant became the personal property of the prince. This contrasts with the 'respected' status of the peasant noted earlier in this chapter. Secondly, the popular religious movement of the Reformation changed in a political movement led by the princes. Moreover, during the Peasant War of 1525, Martin Luther decided in favour of the territorial princes as the secular authority who organised ecclesiastical organisations, making for instance, Electoral Saxony a model of Luther's territorial Church. In brief, by 1539 the Reformation reached the Duchy of Saxony and Electoral Brandenburg.

The acuteness of the religious discord or unresolved conflict between Catholic and Protestant states, estates and princes, was felt well into the early seventeenth century. In particular, the years 1618-1648 are often referred to as 'The Thirty Years War'. In brief, it began as a fraternal conflict between the Habsburgs, Rudolph and Matthias. Moravia, Silesia and Lusatia, were joined to the Bohemian crown in a federal union. Saxony conquered Lusatia, which was under the sphere of the Austrian Habsburgs. In

²¹⁴ Kinder, H., and Hilgemann, W., *The Penguin Atlas of World History*, Volume 1, op. cit. pp. 219-220.

addition, Bohemia 'experienced terrible punishment, including executions and the confiscation of half the nobility's landed property'.²¹⁵ Furthermore, 'coerced re-catholicization (150,000 emigrants) and re-germanization laid the foundation for Czech hatred of the Germans'.²¹⁶ It is of note however, that in the summer of 1618 Silesia and Lusatia agreed to support Bohemia, but despite the peace settlement that followed, Lusatia was ceded to Saxony in 1620.²¹⁷

2.15 Germanic influence revisited

Portal notes that, in 1306 in the Czech experience for instance, 'early monarchs [in the time of Methodius] ... were obliged to make large concessions to the Germanic clergy, against whom there was a strong tide of national feeling'.²¹⁸ The Czechs, by their political association with the Holy Roman Empire were also located at the commercial crossroads for the merchants of other countries.

The phenomenon of Germanic influence is noted earlier in this chapter. For present purposes, there is no need to be detained by extensive historical chronology, but rather, using a historical narrative to illustrate some concepts examined below. As Portal notes, the Czechs were not able to resist German influence, as there was the 'presence of a German colony in Prague and by the activities of German priests and monks, whose influence was increasing'.²¹⁹ Germanisation has also occurred when Czech nobility invited German settlers to new villages. Moreover, in the twelfth and subsequent centuries the Bohemian landowners'

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 253.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ See Parker, G., *Europe in an Age of Crisis 1598-1648*, (London: Fontana Press, 1979). pp. 176, 291-292.

²¹⁸ Portal, R., *The Slavs* op. cit. p. 79.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 80.

... encouragement coincided with a more pressing motive — their own country was overcrowded; and they came flooding into Bohemia, absorbing the *Slav* element in the *border districts* and becoming an important *minority* elsewhere.²²⁰ (Emphases added).

Further, as Portal maintains, the Czech communities owed their constitution to the ‘right of Magdeburg’, not to laws obtaining in the old Czech villages.²²¹ They were populated by a mixed a population, but in time the Czechs became a majority, even though the elites were German. In any event, at the beginning of the fifteenth century the kingdom of Bohemia, which included Silesia, Lusatia and Moravia, ‘was still among the most active and prosperous European states’.²²²

At the same time however, it should be noted that the martyrdom of Jan Hus, and the Hussite movement, although deriving its impetus from social injustice, also evoked a desire for reform within the Church itself by, for instance, preaching against clerical abuses. Perhaps what is more significant here is, Hus’s death started a series of events, ‘which proved decisive for the development of Czech national consciousness’.²²³ The other point, which is crucial to this thesis, it was in the fifteenth century that Czech began to ‘rank as a national language’.²²⁴ But as Stone writes, even though Lusatia had come under the control of the Czech crown, and that there were many Sorbs living outside Lusatia, say in German occupied territory, ‘the Germans everywhere took measures to exclude Slavs from the towns and from trade guilds’.²²⁵

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid. pp. 80-81.

²²² Ibid. p. 85.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 89.

²²⁵ Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1972), p. 13.

As the century progressed, 'the use of Sorbian had once again largely disappeared from the Church', which had been in the hands of German priests.²²⁶ In brief the religious conflicts, which followed the Reformation, including the Thirty Years War, resulted in the Sorbs losing 'two-fifths of the territory they had occupied before the war'.²²⁷ This in turn impoverished the Sorbian peasantry, and the war had brought 'about a political change in the two Lusatias'.²²⁸ In specific terms, the Peace of Prague (1635) saw the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II cede the two margraves of Upper and Lower Lusatia to John George I, Elector of Saxony. But, the Emperor as King of Bohemia, retained supremacy over the Catholic Church in the two Lusatias, where the Sorbs constituted the majority of Lusatian Catholics. Furthermore, as Stone notes, 'the Lusatias were spared the rigours of the Counter-Reformation' and their 'proximity to Bohemia made them a place for refuge for those who fled religious persecution'.²²⁹ From 1635 until 1815, the political status of the Lusatias remained unchanged.

In 1706 the Wendish Seminary was founded in Prague. Two matters of significance arise here. As Stone suggests, firstly the above was instituted to enable the education of clergy to serve the Sorb Catholic majority in Lusatia; and secondly, it allowed for the Church in Bohemia to have 'important footholds in predominantly Protestant territory'.²³⁰ Thus, the need for the clergy to know the language of their parishioners

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid. p. 14.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid. p. 15.

²³⁰ Ibid.

was essential.²³¹ However, the languages of the Prague institutions were only German and Latin, thus limiting the Sorbian students' education in their own language to take place only in the Seminary.

During the eighteenth century the Sorb students formed societies in Wittenberg and Leipzig, such as the *Serbske Prědarske Towarstwo* (Sorbian Preachers' Society) but the membership was limited only to those in the faculty of theology. The Protestant Sorb students had no such institution, as noted above. In brief, the strength of the above society waned, but in 1814 it found new enthusiasm due to the efforts of Handrij Lubenski.

2.16 The Congress of Vienna and the birth of Sorbian national consciousness

The assertion made by Stone in his work cited here, that 'at no time was the existence of the Slavonic population of the Lusatias taken into account in the adjustment of political boundaries',²³² resonates acutely with Preece's²³³ conspicuous omission of any mention of the Sorbs (or Wends, or Lusatia) in her study concerning national

²³¹ Ibid. A similar situation existed in Ireland in 1795 when St. Patrick's College was founded in Maynooth, primarily, though not exclusively as a seminary for the training of priests. In the 1830s, the British Government attempted to address the issue of higher education for non-Anglicans. Higher education had been monopolised by Trinity College Dublin, and it had been a 'bastion of the Ascendancy'. In 1845 Sir Robert Peel established three new colleges as a placatory gesture towards Irish Catholics. The Catholic hierarchy denounced these as "godless colleges". The college at Maynooth gave instructions in Latin, rather than in Gaeltacht, the Irish language. The use of Latin as a school-language is regarded by McDonald as

...the most potent of the causes that have been retarding the progress of theological science in Rome as elsewhere. How many lay people are there who have the need to communicate with Rome? ... the evils that accrue from the use of a dead language in seminaries are daily growing, with the progress of science and history, both of which are now taught exclusively in the different vernaculars.

The point that is being made here by the way of a comparison with the Sorbian situation, is the inconsistent or ambiguous position of the Catholic Church in regards to language policy. In brief, the use of Latin superseded the native language. See McDonald, W., *Reminiscences of a Maynooth Professor*, (Cork: Mercier Press Ltd, 1967), pp. 137-138.

²³² Ibid. p. 16.

²³³ See also Preece, J.J., *National Minorities and the European Nation-State System*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 58-66 for a detailed account of the consideration that was given to 'national minorities' at that time — except the Sorbs of Lusatia.

minorities. In brief, 'the territorial changes which came about in 1815 were decisive in the future evolution of the Sorbian nation'.²³⁴ It should be noted here, that Stone's usage of the term 'nation' is problematic here, as it will become apparent in later analyses. For now however, it may be useful to develop or establish some notion of why the term has some sort of relevance in this study thus far. However, what is important for the purposes of this study is that a *national consciousness* did emerge from the middle of the nineteenth century. Revolution and romanticism were some of the more notable hallmarks in continental Europe at this time.

Jan Šolta claims that 'eminent personalities of Sorbian culture were formed by the German Enlightenment'.²³⁵ These included individuals such as Josef Dobrovský and Handrij Zejler (Andreas Seiler). The latter was to become the leading poet of Sorbian Romanticism. Furthermore, Šolta notes that since the 1820s there was 'a shift of emphasis in favour of Slavonic interrelations', but whilst there was an 'ascendant phase in the history of the bourgeoisie, this trend was in no opposition to the development of the German people'.²³⁶ But in the late 1830s, the middle class and the peasantry supported the national movement of the Sorbs that was formed, and it was a specific Sorbian manifestation in that it was a part of the antifeudal opposition movement in Germany.³²⁷

Perhaps more importantly, despite the fact that the 'language conflict continued unabatedly', as Šolta argues, 'the cultivation of the language and of folk art was

²³⁴ Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation*, op. cit. p. 16.

²³⁵ Šolta, J., in *Language and Culture of the Lusatian Sorbs throughout their History*, Kasper, M. (ed.), translated by Ilja Moser, (Berlin: Akademie- Verlag, 1987), p. 32.

²³⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid. p. 33.

intensified'.²³⁸ Moreover, school education on the basis of the mother tongue was promoted. Sorbian culture in the 1840s was characterised by the founding of *Maćica Serbska* in Bautzen, national choirs, newspapers (such as the *Serbski Nowinkar*, Sorbian Informer in English) and the emergence of a modern national literature, although modest in its publicity.

However, it seems that there was no complete solidarity among the Sorbs when disputes were waged about them and other Slavonic peoples. The Slavonic nations were for instance, accused of Pan-Slavism by serving the interests of tsarist Russia.²³⁹

Furthermore, as Šolta puts it

The conservatives in the executive committee of the *Maćica Serbska* and elsewhere defended the dynasties of princes in 1848, they refused to proclaim Sorbian national demands, suppressed Sorbian-Slavonic contacts and disassociated themselves from the national movement. From now on the conservatives will in principle always be opposed to Slavonic mutuality and work towards integrating the Sorbian minority into the ruling system of the Junkers and bourgeoisie in Germany.²⁴⁰

Even though Šolta shows a certain ideological position in his work, it is interesting to note here, that his claim in the latter instance above resonates with Meschkank's analysis concerning the contemporary situation in Lower Lusatia.²⁴¹ In brief, Meschkank's observations will receive further discussion in Chapter Six, but for

²³⁸ Ibid.Š

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Werner Meschkank was the former director of the Wendisches Museum (in German, Serbski Muzej in Sorbian and Wendish Museum in English) in Cottbus. In brief, he believes that this executive position should be occupied by a Sorb, and not by a German. See "Interviews" in the Appendices for further detail.

present purposes, his 'grievance' concerns the relationship between the federal German government and its administration of Sorbian affairs.

In any event, the events of 1848 cannot be overlooked in terms of Sorbian history. On the one hand, the liberals and democrats mobilised the Sorbian peasants by forming clubs and promoted their education, thus deepening the national movement. Moreover, during this period some Sorbs migrated to Australia and Texas, to escape the revolutionary upheaval in Europe.

At the same time however, there seem to be opposing forces taking place within Sorbian history. In other words, on the one hand protagonists like Jan Smoler, who was active in the drafting of a constitution in Frankfurt successfully requested the inclusion of provisions that were suitable to guarantee the rights of the Slavonic inhabitants in Germany. But, on the other hand as Šolta claims, there was a national rebirth stemming from the peasantry and the middle class, thus forming a national bourgeois.²⁴²

Furthermore it can be argued here, that this would mean to include the Sorbs (Wends), if one subscribes to Preece's thesis where,

The *Vienna Final Act* provides some of the earliest evidence of civil and political rights in addition to religious freedoms being guaranteed to peoples transferred from one sovereign authority to another.²⁴³

²⁴² Šolta, J., in *Language and Culture of the Lusatian Sorbs*, op. cit. p. 34.

²⁴³ Preece, J.J., *National Minorities*, op. cit. p. 61.

Although Sorbian schoolteachers were also committed the social cause of the peasants, they had however, aligned themselves with the democrats on the German side, but supported the demand for introducing a republic, arguing that democracy and monarchy would never agree.²⁴⁴ On the other hand, at this time, the Sorbian journalists explained the position of the Sorbian nationality and its relation to the German people and the Sorbian people of the other.²⁴⁵ Put another way, the Sorbs did not advocate their complete independence of German domination, but rather wanted “to arouse national consciousness in a reasonable and opportune manner... and preserve it without instigating hatred against the Germans”.²⁴⁶ Šolta further explains these objectives by stating that,

Their cultural work was said to be devoted to the cultivation of their language and to scientific research, and these were indeed “the aims by which Lusatian Slavs are chained to the others”. In contrast “the political unity of a people is based on a quite different foundation than on the unity of language”.²⁴⁷

Indeed, the unification of Germany into an empire in 1871 created a new situation that witnessed anti-democratism, militarism and hostility against the Slavs. The new German regime had the hallmarks of oppression and germanisation against the national minorities. Moreover, the year 1871 not only saw a Pan German movement, but also a zealous Prussian spirit, in that Prussian and Saxon authorities wished to see ‘the disappearance of the Sorbian population’.²⁴⁸ As Stranz notes,

²⁴⁴ Šolta, J., in *Language and Culture of the Lusatian Sorbs*, op. cit. p. 33.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 33-34.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 34.

²⁴⁸ Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation*, op. cit. p. 30.

We may conclude with a favourable prospect for the future, for around 1860 the number of Wends was still about 135,000, and in Saxon Upper Lusatia was still rising. The Saxon share is about 50,000 compared with 30,000 in Prussia, which gives no cause to praise the Saxon administration. In view of the immigration of Czech workers Saxony has every reason for germanizing the Slavs in its own territory...²⁴⁹

However, as Stone points out, 'the germanization of Sorbs in Prussia must be seen in the context of a far wider germanizing policy affecting principally the Polish territory under Prussian control'.²⁵⁰ The Poles fiercely resisted the Prussian policy of germanisation, and this in turn placed the Sorbs under greater scrutiny, as the German ruling classes regarded the Sorbs as a potential danger to the Reich.

In spite of the above circumstances, the Sorbs were not united in say, waging a national democratic liberation struggle. For instance, there were also disputes among the Sorbs seen in the Young Sorbian Movement during the 1870s and 1890s, as well as in 1912-13, which concerned the foundation of the national Domowina (Homeland) organisation.

The last decades of the nineteenth-century reflected an earlier lack of understanding by the Sorbs in terms of what the ideas of the revolutionary struggle of the working

²⁴⁹ Kurd von Stranz, 'Die Interessanten Völkerschaften im Reiche', *Nord und Süd. Eine deutsche Monatsschrift*, Breslau: 1904. (Quoted in Marmut Zwahr, *Sorbische Volksbewegung*, Bautzen: 1968, p. 51, cited by Stone, G., *ibid.* p. 31. The population of Prussia in 1861 was 18,491,220. See Pflanze, O., *Bismarck and the Development of Germany Volume II*, p. 106. This population was comprised of a Polish minority numbering 2,265,042 (the largest), 139,428 Lithuanians, 83,443 Wends, and 59,850 Czechs. (*Ibid*) Although Pflanze refers to the "Polish Problem" in his study, which means that there was an increase in nationalism, and thus obstructing the policy of germanisation in that region. In brief it can be said that this marks the continuation of the antagonism between the Slavonic peoples and the Germans.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

class had meant. That is, Sorbian cultural creativity and Sorbian ethnography acted in contradiction to the forces of a national movement.²⁵¹ In other words, there were

... cognitive limits due to class conditions as well as an objective weakening of the middle-class strata impaired the political and ideological positions of Sorbian democratic forces [sic].²⁵²

To be sure, Šolta explains the above as ‘fundamental features of middle- class limitations in the historical consciousness that was moulding the national movement and Sorbian culture’, and these features can be summarised below.

[Firstly], the long-time almost exclusive orientation to the peasants, and at the same time, an obstinate reserve towards the socialist workers’ movement; secondly, an underestimation of the social factor in the national question, and the unilateral emphasis on ethnical viewpoints; thirdly, lacking comprehension of the real extent of common features in Sorbian and German history and, fourthly, a tendency to self-isolation inherent in the Sorbian ethnical community in and from Germany.²⁵³

Thus, one is again reminded of a *duality* as noted above by Meschkank, that it has existed in Sorbian history since earlier times. For instance, the Sorbs had a reputation for loyalty to the state, and in particular to the Saxon Crown, but were still regarded with suspicion.²⁵⁴ Further, it still has currency in present day Germany (see further discussion in Chapter Six).

²⁵¹ Šolta, J., *Language and Culture of the Lusatian Sorbs*, op. cit. p. 35.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation*, op. cit. p. 31.

Moreover, as Stone points out, due to the impossibility of earning a tolerable living from their native soil, a high proportion of young Sorbs enlisted in the Prussian and Saxon armies, which resulted in a very high proportion of Sorbs killed during World War I.²⁵⁵ Perhaps by staying with Stone's study, which refers to the obituary of Jurij Deleńk, one can observe the following sentiment,

In the opinion of various sections of the German authorities overt pro-Sorbian activity by a convinced Sorb is not compatible with German patriotism, and they often say: 'A thoroughly fine man, but a good Sorb and therefore politically unreliable'.²⁵⁶

2.17 Disappointment after the Paris Peace Conference

The defeat of Germany in World War I, gave hope for the prospect of independence for the minorities that were under German domination. This included the Sorbs in Lusatia. Again, Šolta notes, that after the war, 'the general democratic potential of the national movement was strengthened', as moves were made towards a policy of alliances with the socialist workers' movement and the Communist Party.²⁵⁷

By the same token, it should be noted that the Sorbs were backed by Czech supporters in their claim for an independent Lusatia. Adolf Černý published an article in *Národní listy* (national letters) in October 1918, advocating the Sorbian case. In November a Nationalist Committee (*Serbski narodny wuběrk*) was founded with Arnošt Bart as its leader. After the inception of the National Committee, it held public meetings and passed resolutions demanding Sorbian representation at the Paris Peace Conference

²⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 31-32.

²⁵⁶ Delan, J, 'Nekrolog LXXXV', ČMC, 1918, p. 107, cited by Stone, G, op. cit. p. 31.

²⁵⁷ Šolta, J., Language and Culture of the Lusatian Sorbs, op. cit. pp. 35-36.

and the right to national self-determination. Jan Bryl, secretary of the National Committee, together with Bart and the aid of the Czech delegation travelled to Paris and put forward the Sorbian case to the Peace Conference. As it happened, the Sorbs were given assurances that they would be given a certain measure of cultural, educational and religious autonomy, but they received no mention at the Conference, or in the Peace Treaty. On his return to Germany in October 1919, Bart and other activists were arrested, charged with treason and imprisoned.

2.18 Weimar Republic

In spite of the disappointment noted above, the Sorbian 'cause' did not remain static. Under Article 113 of the Constitution of the Weimar Republic, it guaranteed certain rights to national minorities. But as we shall soon see, this constitutional Article was a dead letter.

The Communist group in the Saxon *Landtag*, pressed for the implementation of Article 113 in 1926, and again in 1927, calling for as Stone puts it,

... the training of Sorbian teachers, financial support for the extension of teaching in Sorbian and the appointment of Sorbian judges and officials. They also wished to make any social and political discrimination against the Sorbs a punishable offence.²⁵⁸

The above demands did not materialise. However, as an attempt to resist the official and unchecked germanising policies of the Weimar Republic, the minorities of Germany formed the Union of the National Minorities of Germany (*Verband der*

²⁵⁸ Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation*, op. cit. pp. 32-33.

nationalen Minderheiten Deutschlands). This single defensive organisation, which was founded in 1924 published its own monthly journal from 1925, named *Kulturwille*. In 1926, the journal changed its name to *Kulturwehr*. Moreover, the Union's journal as a voice of the minorities represented the interests of the Poles, Danes, Sorbs, Friesians and Lithuanians. Interestingly, it took part in political activities and endorsed its own candidates at elections.²⁵⁹

During World War I, the Domowina was obliged to suspend its activities. It seems ironical that on the one hand, Sorbs had enlisted in the German army, but on the other, their national organisation's primary object was one of resisting germanisation. Nonetheless, in Bautzen, the first Sorbian sports organisation, *Sokol* (or Falcon) was established in 1920. This organisation extended to the villages in Upper Lusatia. These types of sporting organisations, but also semi-political in nature were found in other Slavonic countries at this time. Perhaps what is of note here, is that these groups were anti-fascist, vehemently opposed to germanising policies, and their cause was aided by the Communist Party — as seen in the case of Sorbs. In brief, they all strove to develop a strong national spirit.

2.19 The Nazi Period

By now, the theme of the oppression of the Slavonic peoples by Germanic regimes has been well established, both in this study and elsewhere. However, for the purposes of this study, this chapter still requires some discussion in respect to the Sorbian population in Germany during Hitler's regime.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. p.33.

The Weimar Republic's secretary of state proposal on the 'Wendish question' was only a mild forerunner during in 1920. Secretary Otto Meissner's institution of a *Wendenabteilung* (Wendish Department) was later supplemented by another organisation concerned with the germanisation of the Sorbs and other Slavs. In brief, from 1935 the *Bund Deutscher Osten* (BDO) was also in place to deal with the 'Wendish question'.

Sorbian national organisations such as *Sokol*, which was forced to disband as early as 1933, were closed down. Virtually all-Sorbian publications were forbidden from 1937, and in that same year the Domowina was closed down for refusing to adopt the term *wendisch sprechende Deutsche* (Wendish-speaking Germans) in its constitution. By the end of 1938 the Sorbian language was not used in schools. In May 1940 Heinrich Himmler devised a plan (see below) for the deportation of some Sorbs to the General Government of Poland, but Hitler rejected this. Sorbian property was confiscated. Yet, it is interesting to note that although the only exceptions regarding publications, as Stone notes, were 'of exclusively religious content',²⁶⁰ due to the Nazi Concordat with the Vatican. The *Serbske Nowiny* (Sorbian News) for instance, shows an appeasing posture to the Nazi regime.²⁶¹ Himmler's policy alluded to in the above can find its resonance in a document stating ... *daß die Gefahr, daß dieses Untermenschenvolk des Ostens durch solche Menschen guten Blutes eine für uns gefährliche da ebenbürtige Führerschicht erhält, erlischt...*²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 35.

²⁶¹ *Serbske Nowiny*, 3 May 1937, p. 4. The author is not cited in this article, which also shows a collection of photographs of the German preparations for war. In this citation, a Sorbian is shown shaking hands with Hitler.

²⁶² Cited at the Wendisches Museum (Wendish Museum), document exhibit, 16 August 2002. Translation provided by Dr J. Petzl, School of English, Journalism and European Languages, University of Tasmania. Email address: <Julia.Petzl@utas.edu.au>.

(Translation: ... that the danger [expire - *imperative*], that this subhuman people of the East is able to maintain a ruling class, dangerous to us because of its status as equal, through such people of good blood...). It is not clear whether Himmler is conceding to Hitler's policy in this instance, given that the Nazis later believed that there was German blood in the Sorbian people, and thus they could be germanised.

In general terms, it can be said that the Nazi policy towards the Sorbs was not that different to its policy concerning the Poles, Czechs and Slovenes, because they were categorised as Slavs, thus being considered as inferior. However, it should be noted that some Nazis regarded some of the above Slavs as prime candidates for germanisation, because of their history of proximity to the Germans. According to Barker, Nazi policy was such that despite denying the Sorbs any attempts to assert an independent ethnic identity, it was also 'careful' not to mete out too harsh a treatment so as to avoid the inhibition of 'swift adoption by many Sorbs of a German identity'.²⁶³ Furthermore, a number of Sorbs were members of the Nazi (NSDAP) Party, and this contradiction deepens when it is noted that 'some Nazis admired certain aspects of Sorbian culture rooted in a peasant community with strong local traditions'.²⁶⁴ Yet, as Barker notes

... from 1936 onwards the emphasis was on the eradication of the Slav character of Lusatia; the terms *Wende* and *wendisch* were to disappear from public view; Sorbian inscriptions on public monuments were removed, for example from the monument to

²⁶³ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany: The Sorbian Minority and The German State Since 1945*, (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), p. 19.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

the Sorbian poet Handrij Zejler in Lohsa (Łaz); many place names were Germanized.²⁶⁵

2.20 The Sorbs after 1945

Perhaps one of the most fundamental features that characterises the beginning of this period, is that the part of defeated Germany in which Sorbs lived was under Soviet occupation and control, which meant that Lusatia was predominantly occupied by other Slavs, mostly Russians, Poles and Ukrainians. This also meant that ‘for the first time ever, the Sorbs saw the possibility of their fate being determined by fellow Slavs’ when the German political structures were in a state of collapse.²⁶⁶

As this period of Sorbian history is the subject of a broader discussion and analysis in Chapter Four under the rubric of language policy, there is no intention to provide a detailed account in this section. Rather, the aim here is simply to provide a thumbnail sketch and to mention the main points for consideration later in this study.

Firstly, the *Domowina* was re-created in Crostwitz (Chróscićy) on 10 May 1945 and was given permission to operate officially in the Soviet zone on 17 May after the Communist Party (KPD). *Domowina* regarded itself as the successor to the Association of Lusatian Sorbs founded in 1912, but banned by the Nazis in 1937. In Prague on 9 May, the *Łužiskoserbski narodny wuběrka* (Lusatian National Committee, hereafter NW) was re-constituted. Between May 1945 and December 1947, Barker notes in his study that the leaders of the two Sorbian organisations sent a number of communiqués

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 26.

... to wartime allies, including Czechoslovakia and Poland, and to the United Nations demanding political and cultural autonomy from Germany, which in its most extreme form envisaged the creation of a separate Sorbian state, under the protection of either Czechoslovakia or Poland, or as an independent state under UN guarantee.²⁶⁷

However, the above demand for Sorbian independence was a far more complicated matter, because Lusatia was west of the Oder-Neisse line as a result of national border changes especially those concerning Poland's western and Czechoslovakia's northern borders. Thus, this brought Lusatia closer to their Slavonic brothers and sisters, than in 1939. Moreover, Lusatia was one of the first areas in Germany west of the Oder-Neisse that experienced an influx of refugees mostly from the former German areas of Silesia and the Sudetenland, until March 1946. At the same time, it was unclear what the Soviet Union might do. Initially it was sympathetic to the Sorbs, making it a crucial ally in this context, but later it became apparent that it was not going to support Sorbian separatism.²⁶⁸ In brief, Soviet supports for Sorbian separatism 'represented a clear breach of Stalin's nationalities policy based on the internationalist principles of Lenin'.²⁶⁹

As it happened, German Communists under the administration of the Soviet Military Administration (SMAD) were flown into the Soviet zone of occupation from the Soviet Union 'to monitor closely any moves towards separatism on the part of Sorbian organizations'. But, the Sorbian sentiment at the time is perhaps best described in a memorandum sent by the Lusatian National Committee to Stalin and President Beneš of Czechoslovakia. It states,

²⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 27.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

For hundreds of years the Lusatian Serbs have seen nothing good from the Germans [...] it is no wonder, then, that the nation today has but one wish: that they should never again in the future be under the domination of the Germans who have shown nothing but enmity.²⁷⁰

From June of 1945 and the early part of 1946, autonomy was the subject of memoranda from, and discussions between the two Sorbian national organisations (that is Domowina and the Narodny wuběrk in Prague). However, at this time there were a number of other international diplomatic manoeuvres taking place. For instance, secession of all or part of Lusatia from the Soviet zone would mean a significant loss of territory and natural resources. As Barker notes, the British Foreign Office feared that although the Soviet Union would not support claims for Sorbian independence, it might consider a future peace treaty, which included provisions for special rights for the Sorbs.²⁷¹ In brief, the British government opposed such a possibility. Moreover, a British Foreign Office file dated February 1945 reveals a mention from the Czechoslovak ambassador of a suggestion that the Sorbs could be transferred to Czechoslovakia in exchange for Sudeten Germans.²⁷²

In the meantime, the KPD had become worried about the separatist sentiment amongst Sorbian representatives, some of whom were members of the Communist Party. Furthermore, the KPD was faced with the issue of preventing the formation of a Sorbian communist party. A transcript of a letter was sent by Pawoł Krječmar, a member of the NW in Prague to the Czechoslovak Communist Party in October 1945.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid. p. 28.

²⁷² Ibid. p. 29.

This in turn, was passed on to Hermann Matern, chairman of the KPD in Saxony.²⁷³

In brief, the KPD wanted the Sorbs to join the German Communist Party as Germans.

But, the Domowina had certain members of the party who had

... previously shown a greater readiness to co-operate with German institutions by publishing a set of proposals in July 1945, "Vorschläge für die deutsch-wendische Zusammenarbeit in der Lausitz" (Proposals for German-Wendish Cooperation in Lusatia).²⁷⁴

Barker claims that the emphasis here was 'on establishing equal status for Sorbian language and culture with German and on the creation of an autonomous Lusatian state within a democratic Germany'.²⁷⁵ However, on 17 September 1945, a joint meeting between the Domowina and the NW set up the Łužiskoserbska narodna rada (Lusatian National Council), which became the executive arm of the two organisations, with a constitution formulated in October. The point is, it became clear to the KPD from the memoranda to the Polish government in November 1945, and to the United Nations in January 1946 that the Sorbs were no longer asking 'for incorporation into Czechoslovakia, but for the creation of an independent Lusatian state under international protection'.²⁷⁶ From 1946, reports revealed the level of hostility between the Sorbs and the Germans from Sudetenland, and threats by Sorbian nationals, in particular against KPD officials. Furthermore, the KPD received reports of anti-KPD sentiment such as that found in a speech of Paweł Nedo, the chairman of the Domowina in which he declared,

²⁷³ Ibid. Barker also notes that despite the communiqué was allegedly sent by the 'Lausitz-serbische Kommunistische Partei' (Lusatian-Serbian Communist Party), it did not exist as a separate structure, but represented the desire of a number of Sorbian Communists in Bautzen and Prague to set up a Sorbian section of the KPD. Ibid. p. 29.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 30-31.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 30.

The Communists have made great promises to the Wends but up to now they have not kept any of them [...] A German is a German, whether a Fascist or Communist, and we want nothing to do with them.²⁷⁷

In response to this Sorbian hostility, the KPD persistently referred to the fact that in their estimation many of the members of the Domowina were former Nazis; about thirty per cent were members of the NSDAP.²⁷⁸

No matter what the allegations that were made during this time, it is interesting to note that Nedo began to pave a way for some kind of political compromise. On the one hand, Nedo recognised the policy of the Communist Party to support the Wendish people in the maintenance of their culture and rights. On the other, he acquiesced that there was no advantage for the Wends to create their own separate Wendish state in Germany.

Nedo's statements became the basis of the subsequent Socialist Unity Party's (SED) 'policy of cultural promotion within a narrowly defined political framework'.²⁷⁹ In other words, the KPD was showing its support for the cultural aspirations of the Sorbs as a strategic means to defuse Sorbian separatist inclinations. At the same time however, it should be borne in mind that the Soviet military authorities in Bautzen had earlier authorised the reconstitution of the Domowina as 'the political, anti-fascist and cultural body representing the whole of the Wendish people'.²⁸⁰ But by the end of 1945, the local German governance was dominated by the KPD, thus reducing the advantage the Sorbs had by negotiating directly with the Soviet authorities.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 31.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 32.

Thus, for present purposes, it is not only important to survey these formative years in post-war Lusatia as a useful historical account, but also, they lay the empirical foundations for further linguistic and political considerations. By this it also means for instance, that the two Sorbian national organisations in July 1946 were split when concerned with the signing of an electoral agreement with the SED. In other words, the SED had hoped that the Domowina would not be allowed to operate as a separate party in the Soviet zone for the first local elections in September of that same year. As Barker notes, the agreement had allowed for Domowina candidates who were not members of the SED to be placed on the SED list.²⁸¹

The above account is by no means a complete history. A more comprehensive political history of Lusatia in the post-war period is beyond the scope of this study. However, it should be apparent by now that the specific intricacies concerning power and domination reflect another side of ethnic conflict, which took place in terms of culture, conflicting ideologies and territory, rather than a period neglected, perhaps as a sanitised piece of Cold War history. The above phenomena have also shaped the destiny of the Sorbian people till the present day.

In order to complete this section of an historical survey, but at the same time reserve the analysis of such concepts as 'Wendish nationality', 'Sorbian rights' and 'bilingual education' for later, one can make the following summary. The census of 29 October 1946 revealed that only 32,000 people declared both their nationality to be Wendish

²⁸¹ Ibid. p. 33.

and citizenship as German.²⁸² It also revealed what little had been achieved in the rebirth of Sorbian cultural life was a result of support from the Soviet occupation, and not due to support from the German authorities.²⁸³ There was a lack of any constitutional provision for Sorbian rights in either the Saxon or the Brandenburg constitutions. This situation had in turn perpetuated the demands for the political separation of Lusatia from Germany. The Sorbs had hoped to be placed under the supervision of a Slav state. It was not until 23 March 1948 that the Law for the Protection of the Sorbian Population's Rights was passed by the Saxon *Landtag*. In brief, this statute too was superseded in the context of the Soviet Occupation Zone and later in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Finally, and as a result new policy measures, such as the GDR Constitution of 1949, the Sorbian language took on new dimensions and vitality. In other words, its use and volume in education and literature exceeded all previous expectations.

2.21 Conclusion

The precise origins of the Slavonic peoples remain unknown, notwithstanding the available archaeological and philological evidence available. However, it can be said that the Slavs are a major branch of the Indo-European family of peoples, who originally lived in the Pripyet Marshes. Their habitat also extended southwards towards the Carpathian Mountains and westwards towards the Vistula. The primitive Slavs have lived for a long period as neighbours of the Germans (Goths), Huns, the Balts, the Celts, Alani and the Turkomans.

²⁸² Ibid. p. 35.

²⁸³ Ibid.

Writers from the ancient Greek and Roman period, such as Tacitus, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy among others, called the Slavonic tribes Venedi or Veneti, whilst the Germans called them Wenden. This chapter has also illustrated the difficulties in differentiating between the Slavonic tribes, or establishing a precise nomenclature. However, Dvornik's study has been useful in this investigation, in that he makes two significant conclusions. Firstly, the group of primitive Slavs known as the Sorbs (Wends), who lived in the area between the Elbe and Saale rivers, have their descendents living in this region to this present day. Second, their idioms and dialects belong to one common language.

An early Sorbian territorial identity becomes apparent in the sixth century. From the time of Charlemagne (at least), there have been antagonisms between Germanic tribes and the Slavs, and here it is safe to include the Sorbs. In brief, historical evidence shows that due to the existence of multiple tribes, or a mixture of races, and group identities, and due to phenomena such as war, conquest, mass population movement (or simply migration), and colonisation, have resulted in cultural heterogeneity. But certain distinct ethnic characteristics, such as language have remained in spite of strong German influences.

As Dvornik notes previously in this chapter, by the early sixth-century Slavonic tribes, which had established themselves from the Adriatic to the Black Sea had been able to 'find a common *political* centre, they would have formed on immense *nation* of which all branches would have spoken the *same language*'.²⁸⁴ (Emphases added).

²⁸⁴ Dvornik, F., *The Slavs*, op.cit. p. 42.

The early eighteenth century saw the beginning of Sorbian education, even though this took place in another Slavonic nation, Czechoslovakia. Moreover, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was a significant Czech influence upon the Sorbs. In terms of international politics, the Sorbs voiced their wish for an independent Lusatia at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The role of Czechoslovakia in Lusatian affairs gathered momentum soon after the end of World War II, when Sorbian national consciousness and separatism became more pronounced.

Despite the Sorbs' reluctance to be under German domination, Lusatia found itself under the control of the German Democratic Republic in the wake of the new frontiers that were re-drawn by the Soviet Union. Although the Soviet authorities had allowed for the re-establishment of Sorbian national organisations, the Sorbian struggle for autonomy became a political compromise for the KPD. In other words, in order to extinguish Sorbian separatist sentiments, the *Land* of Saxony codified special provisions such as cultural and linguistic autonomy, or rights, for this Slavonic minority living in Lower and Upper Lusatia. An analysis of the GDR's language policy is the subject of following chapter.

Chapter 3

We speak and speak about language. What we speak of, language, is always ahead of us. Our speaking merely follows language constantly. Thus we are continually lagging behind what we first ought to have overtaken and taken up in order to speak about it. Accordingly, when we speak of language we remain entangled in a speaking that is persistently inadequate.¹

Martin Heidegger 1889-1976

Part I

Defining Language and its Associated Concepts

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the importance of language in its many functions by presenting an analysis of language as a concept or as a phenomenon. It is the purpose of this chapter to review theories of language or linguistics, which have already been proposed. The purpose is to lay a theoretical basis, which will enable the reader to obtain a comprehensive orientation of how language and its relation with identity are crucial to the central hypothesis of this study.

Language is a phenomenon that is often taken for granted. In other words, unless one has a physiological impediment or disability, or is in another country where the language that is spoken is not the mother tongue, it is then that one may become concerned with the construct of *language*. But even so, the significance of the circumstance(s) may be more directly related to a matter of 'survival', rather than an academic investigation. In other words, it refers to the procurement of basic human

¹ Heidegger, M., *On The Way to Language*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), p.75, translated by Peter D. Hertz. This work was originally published by Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, under the title *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, copyright 1959 by Verlag Günther Neske.

needs such as food, clothing and shelter in a given place at a given time, rather than the reasons for speaking or communicating in a certain language in the first place.

In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the term, one needs to examine this concept of language from psychological, philosophical, political, developmental, and scientific perspectives. It should be noted here, that this study presents some analytical issues. In other words, it may be argued as to whether one should begin with a discussion on 'the origins of language' first. However, this in turn raises another issue as to where one should place an examination of the discipline of 'linguistic(s)'. For the purposes of this chapter, it will be useful to commence with defining the term *language*.

3.1 Defining language

A useful place to begin this inquiry can be found in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*², where it defines the term language as,

1: the words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them used and understood by a considerable community and established by long usage.

2 a: audible, articulate, meaningful sound as produced by the action of the vocal organs; b: a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalised signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings; c: an artificially constructed primarily formal system of signs and symbols (as symbolic logic) including rules for the admissible expressions and for their transformation; d: the means by which animals communicate or are thought to communicate with each other.

3 a: the faculty of verbal expression and the use of words in human intercourse; b: the faculty of speech; especially ability to speak in a foreign tongue.

² Babcock-Gove, P., (Editor in Chief), *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, (Cologne: Könnemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1961), p. 1270.

4: a special manner of use of expression; as a: form or manner of verbal expression: characteristic mode of expression of an individual speaker or writer: b: the vocabulary and phraseology belonging to an art or department of knowledge; c: abusive epithets.

5 a: a people or a nation as distinguished by its speech; b: a national division of an international order.³

The above definition already enables one to recognise some salient characteristics that constitute a meaning of the term ‘language’. In brief, the above definition claims that it is a constructed method of vocally (verbally) communicating, expressing and combining words that are ‘used and understood by a considerable community and established by long usage’.

However, the purpose of the above definition is to merely introduce the concept of language in rather brief terms. Already, this definition refers to language as a marker or an identifier of national groups. Indeed this is a sophisticated theme. Thus it seems that it is useful to first discuss the origins of language in the context of a biological or evolutionary process.

3.1.1 The origins of language

To begin with, it would be safe to say that the species of the animal kingdom ranging from say, fish to birds to mammals to primates to humans, ‘aspire’ to a communicative complexity. In brief, social adult animals such as fish, birds and mammals have a range or a repertoire of communication ability or size. (Hereafter, referred to as repertoire size). Interestingly, there appears to be little correlation between repertoire size and the location of a species in the hierarchy of the animal

³ Ibid.

kingdom.⁴ For instance, the repertoire size for different species ranges from fifteen to thirty-five communicative displays, and ‘cuttlefish, as far as it is known, have about as many as different communicative displays as chimps do’.⁵

Needless to say, the communicative behaviours of other primates have been the source of great interest for scholars, in that they employ *gestures*, among other modes to communicate with the members of their species. Perhaps one of the more impressive interpretations of this behaviour is found in Arthur C. Clarke’s portrayal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*⁶ of Moonshine, who is the leader of an ape ‘tribe’. In this depiction of an animal having an ability to communicate, Moonshine discovers a long bone shaped object, which he intuitively knows its potential as a weapon, and by using gestures he communicates this discovery to other apes in the group.⁷

According to the study noted previously above, biologists who study the evolution of behaviour speculate that there are selective pressures that prevent the overall size of a repertoire from growing beyond a certain point, even though new mechanisms are developed to suit new adaptive circumstances.⁸ It is argued that human language is not just the endpoint of an evolutionary process, but rather, a behavioural counterpart of an appendage with ‘specific, enormously hypertrophied development of structures with rather different original functions’.⁹ The question remains however, why such a

⁴ The title of this paper is cited without an author under the heading of “Origins of Language” in the Website: <http://www.upenn.edu/courses/Spring_2001/ling001/origins.html>, p.1. Sighted 14 December 2002.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Clarke, A.C., *2001: A Space Odyssey A Space Odyssey*, (New York: The Penguin Group Penguin Books USA Inc., 1968), pp. 20-26.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “Origins of Language”

<http://www.upenn.edu/courses/Spring_2001/ling001/origins.html>, op.cit. p.1.

⁹ Ibid. p. 2.

complex system of communication did not evolve in other species? One possible explanation may be found in the idea of the ‘language instinct’.

3.1.2 The language instinct

The idea that language is a fundamental instinct of humans is argued by Pinker, who puts forward his perspective by stating

Language is not a cultural artifact [sic] that we learn the way we learn to tell the time or how the federal government works. Instead, it is a distinct piece of the biological makeup of our brains. Language is a complex, specialized skill, which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same in every individual, and is distinct from more general abilities to process information or behave intelligently. For these reasons some cognitive scientists have described language as a psychological faculty, a mental organ, a neural system, and a computational module. But I prefer the admittedly quaint term “instinct”. It conveys the idea that people know how to talk in more or less the sense that spiders know how to spin webs¹⁰.

Linguistic scholars such as Chomsky suggests ‘that humans are innately endowed with a system of intellectual organization, call it the “innate state” of the mind’.¹¹ He continues by stating,

Through interaction with the environment and maturational processes, the mind passes through a sequence of states in which cognitive structures are represented. In the case of language, it is fairly obvious that rapid and extensive changes take place during an early period of life, and a “steady state” is achieved which then undergoes only minor modification.¹²

¹⁰ Pinker, S., *The Language Instinct*, (London: The Penguin Group, 1994), p. 18.

¹¹ Chomsky, N., *Reflections of Language*, (London: Temple Smith, 1976), p. 137.

¹² Ibid. p. 138.

It seems that Chomsky's argument does not fully satisfy an explanation regarding the origins of language. For instance, the notion of 'interaction' is vague, because human interaction can be so broad in its form of expression. Different movements of the limbs may be a way of interacting to show feelings of aggression or fear. In brief, the latter example may be a non-verbal or a mute manifestation. If one considers that interaction may be the verbal exchange between parents and their infant children, this too does not fully explain the origins of language. Although, Chomsky accepts that

...where we deal with cognitive structures, either in a mature state of knowledge and belief or the initial state, we face problems, but not mysteries. When we ask how humans make use of these cognitive structures, how and why they make choices and behave as they do, although there is much we can say as human beings with intuition and insight, there is little, I believe, that we can say as scientists.¹³

But as it will soon be apparent, this question regarding the origins of language, in part at least goes back many centuries. Moreover, it should become apparent that it is difficult to separate the arguments that are put forward on the subject of the origins of language. It can be argued that biological factors broadly include the way human instincts operate, which in turn allow for an analysis of *language acquisition* from a behavioural perspective. There is a synonymous overlap between the terms used (particularly origins of language and language acquisition), and the theoretical perspectives employed in such an investigation.

Humboldt argued that language is an inner need of man, 'not merely an external necessity form maintaining communal intercourse, but a thing lying in his own

¹³ Ibid.

nature'.¹⁴ In any event, while it is generally agreed that humans are endowed with something that may be regarded as an *instinct* for language, it is less clear where this instinct came from.

3.1.3 The Experiment of Psammetichus

In order to help explain the theoretical approach to language acquisition, it may be useful to refer to the experiment of Psammetichus, King of Egypt, as described by Herodotus.¹⁵ Psammetichus wanted to find out whether the Phrygians were an older than the Egyptians. To do this, he had two infants brought up from birth in such a manner, in which they were prevented from hearing any language whatsoever. After several months it was noticed that when the child they used the word *βεκός*, which means, “bread” in Phrygian. From this Psammetichus concluded that Phrygian was the older of the two languages. Although one cannot be absolutely sure about the validity of this experiment, Vendryes suggests that ‘*the faculty of language was innate in man*’.¹⁶ (Emphases added).

Moreover, Vendryes argues that following Psammetichus, a modified experiment could be devised where the children would ‘spontaneously create a language for themselves, and that it would not be Phrygian’.¹⁷ It seems here that Pinker’s assertion that language ‘spontaneously’ develops in the child, converges with the Vendryes’s, eighty years earlier.

¹⁴ “Origins of Language”

<http://www.upenn.edu/courses/Spring_2001/ling001/origins.html>, op.cit.p.2.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Vendryes, J., *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1925), p. 9.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 10.

Need, argues Vendryes, would inevitably bring an organ into use. Put another way, perhaps one can use the metaphorical expression, ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ which would resonate with evolutionary changes or adaptation. But is it a reasonable assumption, that *need*, and *instinct* is interconnected? The experiment conducted by Psammetichus clearly shows the instinct for survival, even among infants. In other words, humans need food, and therefore in order to survive humans would inevitably use their physiology, that is, the organs associated with the production of speech to satisfy a basic need. Indeed, the above account is simplistic to say the least.

3.1.4 Other theoretical perspectives

Certainly, an opposing theory may well be proposed elsewhere, but for now let it remain with the above assumption and return to the discussion of the origins of language. Interestingly, Aristotle, according to Sayce, would distance himself from the theory of the natural origin of speech.¹⁸ Aristotle declares unequivocally that ‘language originates through the agreement and convention of men’.¹⁹ Furthermore,

Words, he holds, have no meaning in themselves; this is put into them by those who utter them, and they then become so many symbols of the objects signified. “For the sentence when heard, makes one’s meaning intelligible, not necessarily but accidentally, since it consists of words, and each word is a symbol”.²⁰

¹⁸ Sayce, A.H., *Introduction to the Science of Language*, Volume I in two volumes (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co Ltd, 1900), p.11.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

It is of note that, Aristotle makes no distinction between thought and language; *concept* and *word* are interchangeable terms; and his ten categories into which all objects can be classed are as much grammatical as logical, or a mixture of both.²¹ The sentence is analysed in the interests of formal logic. Kant and Hegel observed that Aristotle's proposal is 'purely empirical; it is based on the grammar of a single language, and is nothing but an analysis of the mode in which the framers of that language unconsciously thought'.²² However, in order to understand and criticise the above hypothesis, one needs to employ a comparative philological approach, so as to enable to distinguish between the universal and the particular in the grammar of Greek and Aryan.

No matter what criticisms may have been made about this logic and how the Greek language was built upon, it remains that Greek grammar gained an equivalent advantage. In addition to the "noun" and the "verb", Aristotle introduced the "particle" and the term "case" to denote any kind of flection. Furthermore, he divided nouns into simple and compound, and 'invented for the neuter another name than that given by Protagoras, and starting from the termination of the nominative singular endeavoured to ascertain the rules for denoting a difference of gender'.²³ The Stoics (280-206 BC) continued Aristotle's work. They perfected his logical and grammatical system. The Stoics separated the "article" from the particles, and determined a fifth part of speech, or the "adverb"; confined "case" to the flections of the noun, and distinguished the four principal cases by names.²⁴ Moreover, the Stoics divided the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

verb into it tenses, moods, and classes. Chrysippus, an adherent of the Stoic school separated nouns into *appellativa* and *propria*.²⁵

In any event, Aristotle's and the Stoics' work needs refinement here. For instance, his assertion that 'language originates through the agreement and convention of men' is vague in itself. Ochs, in her study, argues that 'every society has at least one theory of knowledge'.²⁶ Several important points are suggested here. Ochs argues that these theories of knowledge 'specify among other functions the *limits of knowledge* (what can be known) and the *path to knowledge*'.²⁷

It follows, that the above is a crucial part of the study of children's intellectual development. Piaget, as Ochs notes, examined 'children's concepts of reality and procedures for acquiring knowledge over developmental time',²⁸ whereby 'the relationship between thought and language centres around the period of the development of concrete operations, particularly with respect to conversation'.²⁹ In brief according to Piaget, it is the operative structural aspect, which underlies the development of language and not the other way around. Bruner however, presents an opposing view, which is

[T]he child becomes "operational" because the experiences which promote the development of cognitive structures are brought under the control of organisational principles which related directly to the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ochs, E., *Culture and Language Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.26.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid. Ochs does not provide a reference for Piaget in this instance.

²⁹ Piaget, J., in McNally, D.W., *Piaget, Education and Teaching*, (Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), pp. 141-142.

rules of language and which therefore allow the child to use language to transform his experience.³⁰

However, there is no need to be detained with detail about child or developmental psychology here. Perhaps what is important here is, to propose that there is an interdependence between linguistic and sociocultural knowledge, which can be summarised by the following model presented by Vygotsky

Linguistic knowledge \leftrightarrow Activity \leftrightarrow Sociocultural knowledge.

This was embellished by Wertsch, Scribner and Cole's research on literary practices and cognitive development.³¹

As Ochs points out, 'most researchers in the field of language acquisition are interested in processes that facilitate or inhibit the acquisition of linguistic structures'.³² It may be noteworthy here, that although there is a sense that the analyses by various writers thus far, focus on language (monolingual) development and acquisition, one can apply the above theoretical perspective in the case of bilingual inhibition experienced by young Sorbians. In other words, acquisition of the Sorbian language may be inhibited by the socialisation that the dominant language (German) has more *prestige* and *status* than an endangered Slavonic language. This phenomenon will be taken up in a more detailed discussion on this in Chapter Six.

To return to the present survey, Ochs examines how children's production and comprehension of language is 'examined for patterns and strategies, which are then

³⁰ Ibid. For a further discussion on the extraction of linguistic knowledge from the human infant, see Morse, P.A., "Infant Speech Perception" in *Early Cognitive Development*, Oates, J., (ed.) (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 129-143.

³¹ Vygotsky, L.S., in Ochs, E., *Culture and Language Development*, op.cit. p.15.

³² Ochs, E., in *Culture and Language Development*, op.cit. p.29.

related to a variety of considerations'.³³ For instance, properties of grammatical systems and 'perceptual ease' or 'conceptual distinctions ...', provide insights into the nature of children's linguistic competence and some predictive power concerning children's linguistic performance over developmental time'.³⁴ Thus, perception and conception, which other things being equal, are just two variables together with cultural and social conditions, which will account for language acquisition. The end point of acquisition is referred to as competence, and when competence is considered it is usually regarded as grammatical competence, according to writers such as Chomsky³⁵ or communicative competence by Hymes³⁶.

Ochs explains grammatical competence as the 'tacit knowledge underlying the grammatical structure of clauses and sentences'.³⁷ Meanwhile, communicative competence 'concerns the tacit knowledge underlying language use and encompasses a wider range of knowledge than that conveyed by grammatical competence'.³⁸ It deals with knowledge beyond that of structures such as clause and sentence, and includes sequences, genres, and registers. Finally, this analysis can be emphasised by summarising Ochs's work here by stating

*Communicative competence involves tacit knowledge of norms relating to structures to social situations. This knowledge provides, along with grammatical knowledge, the foundation for interpreting and expressing ideas and actions.*³⁹

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid. pp.29-30.

³⁵ Chomsky, N., *Reflections on Language*, op. cit. p. 147.

³⁶ Hymes, D., cited in Ochs, E., in *Culture and Language Development*, op.cit. p. 33.

³⁷ Ochs, E., in *Culture and Language Development*, op.cit., p.33.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. pp.33-34.

Notwithstanding the above theory, it needs to be noted here that linguistic scholars fall into two broad groups — that is those who subscribe to a descriptive approach to language acquisition analysis (structuralist), and those who subscribe to an explanation of language acquisition (formalist). It is fair to say that in this study, one is more concerned with performance competence, that is, the ability to speak a language, no matter if it is erroneous, rather than acquisition competence, which introduces another theory, that of Chomsky's universal grammar (UG).⁴⁰ To sum up, the endpoint of acquisition is competence and it involves a sociocultural process.

3.1.5 Other theories

During the nineteenth century, scholars speculated about the origins of language, presenting some simplistic and sometimes sarcastic names. The *Bow-Wow* theory for instance, suggests that language originated in onomatopoeic words that mimicked the sounds of the things they described, such as animal calls.⁴¹ The *Pooh-Pooh* theory argues that language originated in words derived from reflexive sounds used to express human emotions such as pain and anger.⁴² The above are just two theories that arose during the nineteenth-century, but it was Darwin who was associated with the *Pooh-Pooh* theory. Darwin claimed, 'anyone fully convinced, as I am, that man is descended from some lower animal, is almost forced to believe *a priori* that articulate language has developed from inarticulate cries'.⁴³

⁴⁰ Chomsky, N., *Reflections on Language*, op.cit. p. 148.

⁴¹ "Origins of Language",
<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/Spring_2001/ling001/origins.html>, op.cit. p.3.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

However, in 1876, the Oxford philologist Müller following Descartes' assertion of the essential difference between humans and animals, declared language to be "the Rubicon that no brute will dare to cross".⁴⁴ Müller and his followers persuaded the Linguistic Society of Paris to ban all presentations on language evolution from its meetings and publications.⁴⁵

In brief, there was little interest in the topic for the next 110 years, until a scientific understanding or approach became current. This scientific approach includes general hominid palaeontology; the functioning of the larynx; (paleo)-neurology; ethology and the role of vocal displays (bird song, whale song); studies of primate behaviour, social organization, vocal signalling, and evolutionary theory. Moreover, evolutionary psychology has renewed interest in the question of the origins of language.

3.1.6 Is there a genetic basis?

The transmittal of genetic information is the essence of life. Yet, terms such as "communication" are often used to describe the expression of genetic information within the cell, and the transfer of genetic information to new cells. But the phenomenon of genetic information and genetic communication is shared by every other living species. It is only human beings that we can talk with. This in turn leads one to ask further questions: what aspects of the human genome make spoken language possible? What were the selective factors our ancestors experienced, which led these characteristics to develop? Perhaps there is no single definitive answer for the evolution or the 'genetic ability' for the 'creation' of language amongst the human

⁴⁴ Ibid. The term 'philology' is what requires defining here. It is defined in the section below, which discusses other related terms used in this Chapter.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

species, in the same way as Moonshine realised that the object he held was to be a weapon. However, Pinker claims that, ‘a single dominant gene, the biologists believe, controls the ability to learn grammar’.⁴⁶ Therefore, on the basis of this assertion, one could ask if there is a genetic factor for the ability to acquire or understand syntax, vocabulary and so on. But it would be rash to rest an argument on genetic evidence alone, when it should be apparent that there are multiple factors that contribute to the knowledge of language. For now the fact remains, however, that the human species has ‘adapted genetically to facilitate the use of the spoken language’.⁴⁷

3.1.7 Evolution as a consideration regarding the origins of language

For the purposes of this study, one may by-pass a detailed discussion of human evolution by stating that, it refers to a process taking roughly five million years. In brief, this process refers to when humans separated from the ancestors of today’s great apes, and it began with *Ardipithecus ramidus*, then *Australopithecus* to *Homo erectus* to *Homo sapiens*. The point is, however, ‘the language-related changes took place from the neck up and they took place in two areas: the mouth and throat (the vocal tract), and the brain’.⁴⁸ In brief, these changes occurred between neck and nose, and thus adapted our vocal tracts for speaking.⁴⁹ As this source notes, ‘specifically, we shortened our muzzle and the oral cavity it contains, and stretched out our pharynx (the throat) by lowering the larynx’.⁵⁰ This evolutionary process like others can be broadly summarised by saying that adaptation has been necessary for survival of the

⁴⁶ Pinker, S., *The Language Instinct*, (London: The Penguin Group, 1994), p.297.

⁴⁷ “Origins of Language”

<http://www.upenn.edu/courses/Spring_2001/ling001/origins.html>, op.cit.p.4.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 5.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid. pp.5-6.

species. In a sense, the above description introduces the next theme — the physiology of speech.

3.1.8 The Physiology of Speech

First, it should be noted that during the first year of an infant, the speech production system is being ‘anatomically prepared’. By borrowing from Pinker’s work, one learns that

A newborn has a *vocal tract like a nonhuman mammal*. The larynx comes up like a periscope and engages the nasal passage, forcing the infant to breathe through the nose and making it anatomically possible to drink and breathe at the same time. By three months the larynx has descended deep into the throat, opening the cavity behind the tongue (the pharynx) that allows the tongue to move forwards and backwards and produce a variety of vowel sounds used by adults.⁵¹ (Emphases added).

In the first few months there is very little linguistic development. Human beings have no special organ for language. For the greater part, the production of speech begins as an utterance in the brain of the speaker. The hearer receives it and the ‘association of the signal with experience — past and present, individually isolated and socially shared — is below the surface and can be fathomed only by soundings’.⁵² As Lotz further puts it, ‘Speech is formed in the tract which is designed primarily for two of the oldest functions, eating and breathing’.⁵³ Perhaps, to state the obvious, like any other sound, the ear receives speech, which is a sensory receptor. In order to produce speech, air is manipulated mainly in two cavities, the pulmonary and oral-pharyngeal.

⁵¹ Pinker, S., *The Language Instinct*, (London: The Penguin Group, 1994), p.265.

⁵² Lotz, J, “Linguistics: Symbols Make Man” in *Psycholinguistics: A Book of Readings*, Saporta, S., (ed.), (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc. 1961), p.1.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 3.

Between these cavities there is a flexible bundle of muscles, the vocal folds, which produces the voice that is necessary in speech and singing. Furthermore during speech, the passages of the pharynx and the uvula are narrowed and the muscles are tensed, which is necessary to build up the pressure required for the production of sound.

However, another question or another issue arises here: at what point in the development of an infant does its babbling vocalisations constitute language? The following is a brief survey of this transition.

3.1.9 Speech Development

According to Pinker, 'all infants come into the world with linguistic skills'.⁵⁴ Babies learn the sounds of their language throughout the first year. Interestingly, by six months babies group the distinct sounds together so that 'their language collapses into a single phoneme, while continuing to discriminate equivalently distinct ones that their language keeps separate'.⁵⁵ In other words, amongst the sounds of cries, grunts, coughs, laughs and the like, babies between five and seven months 'begin to play with sounds, rather than using them to express their physical and emotional states'.⁵⁶ The sequences of different sounds such as hisses and hums, among others, begin to sounds like consonants and vowels. Moreover, between seven and eight months infants begin to

... babble in real syllables like *ba-ba-ba*, *neh-neh-neh*, and *dee-dee-dee*. The *sounds are the same in all languages*, and consist of phonemes and syllable patterns that are most common across

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 263.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 264.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 265.

languages. (Emphases added). By the end of the first year, babies vary their syllables, like *neh-nee*, *da-dee*, and *meh-neh*, and produce... sentence like [sic] gibberish.⁵⁷

The question concerning babbling in the above can now be answered. Again one can use Pinker's work, which maintains,

The infant is like a person who has been given a complicated piece of audio equipment...but missing the instruction manual. The infant has been given a set of neural commands than can move the articulators every which way, with wildly varying effects on the sound. By listening to their babbling, babies in effect write their own instruction manual; they learn how much to move which muscle in which way to make which change in sound. *This is a prerequisite to duplicating the speech of their parents.*⁵⁸ (Emphases added).

3.2 Different Forms of Language

By using Clark's illustration of a non-verbal form of communication in the above instance of Moonshine, it leads one to believe that there are different forms of language that are possible. In this study the more important one is auditory language, because of the variety of means of expression it provides. Auditory language can be referred to as spoken or articulate language, and it shall be the primary focus of this chapter. Indeed, sometimes-auditory language is supplemented by visual language, as well as gestures to some extent, which can emphasise the word(s). Facial expression, as Vendryes argues, no less than the voice, translates the emotions and thoughts.⁵⁹ Furthermore, he maintains that visual language is probably quite as old as auditory language. There is no reason to believe, and certainly no means of proving that one

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 266.

⁵⁹ Vendryes, J., *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History*, op.cit. p. 7.

antedated the other.⁶⁰ It is regarded here that writing belongs to the category of visual language, together with every system that is based on signals or signal codes. In brief, language is a system of signs and/or symbols that are capable of serving as a means of communication between humans.

Vendryes asserts that the majority of visual languages in use today are directly derived from the auditory one.⁶¹ By way of an illustration, he uses the example of the marine signal code, which is intended to furnish visual equivalents for the words and sentences of existing languages.⁶² But signals do not give information as to the origin of signs as representation of ideas. That is, a particular sign has been given preference to another by convention. Moreover, it is a convention with certain inherent limitations. Such languages are by definition artificial.⁶³

3.2.1 Gesture as a visual language

Gesture is one of the natural uses of visual language. In this it does not refer so much to the gesture that can be observed in the civilised world, but as Vendryes points out, the language of gesture employed by certain peoples, side by side with auditory language.⁶⁴ It is a system of gestures, which by them express what words are meant to express namely, ideas.⁶⁵ Even though the above language may be readily identified with say, primitive societies, the same principle of using signs is associated with the gesture-language of deaf mutes. It is a matter of substituting one sense for another that enables us to communicate with them. However, for present purposes one needs to

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid. pp.7-8.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 8.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

assume that there is no visual disability in such a group. In other words, communication by gestures needs to be interpreted by the visual senses. In any event, the language of gestures beckons one to investigate the origin of the linguistic employment of signs. (It needs to be acknowledged here, and as an illustration of organised or systematic gestures, *Auslang* is an official sign language for those who have auditory loss or impairment). For present and practical purposes however, this study will mainly focus on the aspects of language concerning those without sensory impairment. In brief, human beings outside the ordinary conditions of life cannot assist us in an analysis of the evolution of communication in society composed of normal beings.

3.3 Acquisition of language

The question that may need to be asked is whether language is an acquired fact resulting from education, or is it an instinctive and spontaneous phenomenon. Once more, this analysis needs to revisit the development stage takes place during infancy. From birth children are aware of their surrounding environment by their hearing, and the earliest babbling makes them a part of social interchange.

In broader terms, the above process becomes one of socialisation, a concept that implies notions of society and culture. Language acquisition is also a part of socialisation, and our understanding of language acquisition depends on how one can conceptualise language. But again, one is reminded of how some take it for granted that language is organised in terms of a set of principles or rules. Moreover, and simultaneously or synonymously, it can be said that language has structures that make up a system known as grammar. The discussion of grammar will be discussed later.

3.4 Other Definitions of Language

The initial definition of language noted above identified some other important characteristics, such as the concepts of ‘a considerable community’ and ‘long usage’.⁶⁶ In other words, it can be assumed that a language is a characteristic of a distinct group of people, and that there is some history accorded to them.

So far, this definition may appear to be broad and vague. However, in the latter part of the definition noted above, one can recognise that language is attributed to a ‘considerable community’, which is also ‘a people or nation as distinguished by its speech’.⁶⁷ But this description becomes problematic, when a language such as English, Spanish or French is used by people, communities or nations that are not English, Spanish or French in terms of their nationalities or culture. Moreover, if such group of people exist as a sovereign state, the language used to communicate or express something (which may also include a written form) may be say, in English, but the official language of that sovereign state may be the native language. The instance of the Republic of Ireland is just one illustration here, where *Gaeltacht* (Irish) was the ‘official’ language. But English is the verbal expression used in daily human intercourse, and it now has official status in Ireland. At the same time, the Gaelic language is used in the written form of expression in instances, such as road signs and the Irish Constitution. The above highlights not only a ‘practical’ use of the native language, but also it should be apparent that there is a political dimension too. Certainly, in brief, the above Hibernian experience illustrates what is usually referred to as a nation (or a nation-state in this case) as being bilingual. In simple terms, there

⁶⁶ Babcock-Gove, P., (Editor in Chief), *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, op. cit. p. 1270.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

are two languages that are spoken by that group of people, which constitutes 'a considerable community'.

Another definition of language may be located in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, where it begins its claim by stating (reproduced below),

- [1.a.] The whole body of words and of methods of combination of words used by a nation, people, or race; a 'tongue'. *dead language*: a language no longer in vernacular use. *first language*: one's native language. *second language*: a language spoken in addition to one's native language; the first foreign language one learns.
- b. Applied to methods of expressing the thoughts, feelings, wants, otherwise than by words.
 - c. Applied to the inarticulate sounds used by the lower animals.
 - d. Any of the numerous systems of precisely defined symbols and rules for using them that have been devised for writing programs or representing instructions and data.
- 2.a. In generalized sense: Words and the methods of combining them for the expression of thought.
- b. Power or faculty of speech; ability to speak a foreign tongue.
- 3.a The form of words in which a person expresses himself; manner or style of expression.
- b. The phraseology or terms of a science, art, profession, or of a class of persons.
 - c. The style (of a literary composition); also, the wording (of a document, statute).
 - d. long language: (a) verbosity (b) language composed of words written in full, as opposed to cipher.
 - e. (to speak (talk) someone's language, to speak (talk) the same language: to have an understanding with someone through similarity of outlook and expression, to get on well with someone; to speak a different language (from someone): to have little in common (with someone) [sic].⁶⁸

Reber however, presents his definition in the following.

⁶⁸ Simpson, J.A., and Weiner, E.S.C., (eds.) *The Oxford English Dictionary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), Volume 8 in 18 volumes, p.634.

All know the meaning of this term — a language is what we speak, the set of arbitrary conventional symbols through which we convey meaning, the culturally determined patterns of vocal gestures we acquire by virtue of being raised in a particular place and time, the medium through which we code our feelings, thoughts, ideas, experiences, the most uniquely human of behaviors [sic] and the most ubiquitous behavior [sic] of humans. Yet, as the term is used, it may mean all of these, none of them, or even things very different.⁶⁹

It should be apparent in Reber's definition that there is an *assumption* that everyone knows what we mean by 'language', that is, as a concept, everyday usage and its application. But, it is not often that one is required to give it some specificity or even analysis. A similar argument can be applied to the concept of 'time'. Certainly, most, if not all are familiar with the measure of units of time such as seconds, minutes, hours, months and a calendar year. But, it can be argued here that if we were required to provide a definition of time, or to explain the concept, it may present us with some difficulties. For instance, *time* may be simply defined as a chronological series of events. But such a definition of time may be rendered as useless, because it can be said for instance, that human history, is none other than a series of chronological events. Thus, are time and history the same? Similarly it is argued here that the concept of language may be all too familiar, but one is left with the question, 'what is language'? However, Reber makes the qualification when he states 'The conviction that we know the meaning of this word language lasts only so long as we refrain from attempts at specifying what we know'.⁷⁰ In other words, the concept of language means something specific if one is to refer to sign language, such as that used by the profoundly deaf, (or in a mime), or in specialised areas such as the natural sciences, (physics, chemistry, medicine), and computer technology to name but few.

⁶⁹ Reber, A., *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1985), p. 390.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Perhaps the above definitions can be summarised by simply stating that a general definition of language that can be given is that it is a *system of signs*.⁷¹ As Vendryes explains, 'To study the origin of language means...to look for the particular signs naturally at man's disposal and the manner in which he was led to employ them'.⁷² Thus it follows that by signs and symbols are capable of serving as a means of communication between individuals. Any sensory organ such as, olfactory, visual, tactile or auditory, may serve to create a language. According to Vendryes, 'there is language whenever two individuals come to attribute a certain sense to a given act and perform this act with a view to communicating with each other'.⁷³ Moreover, even the causal observer or participant may have become familiar with the term 'body language', where there may be a situation where a particular posture, such as folded arms, or crossed legs may be intended to give the receptor a specific message. For instance, in the former case, it may be an expression of boredom, insolence, disapproval or defensive behaviour. In the latter case, it may be simply a sign of sedentary comfort during a television interview, or a suggestive or revealing gesture by a female. The above are merely illustrations of body language, but the point here is that neither involves sensory organs, nor the spoken word. In brief, we need to consider whether synthetic forms of language constitute or qualify as language.

Furthermore, it can be added to this list of 'inventions' and thus highlight the complexity of the term, *language*, if it is questioned whether Esperanto satisfies classification as language, or an invented coded system 'of socio-political

⁷¹ Vendryes, J., *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History*, op.cit. p. 7.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

reformers'.⁷⁴ A similar situation arises when referring to 'Denglish', that is, the usage of English words in contemporary German language. Interestingly, the above introduces the role of English as a globalised language, where it particularly impinges on autochthonous (that is, belonging to the original or earliest known inhabitants) languages by way of popular culture, food, commerce and travel. This theme will be the subject of later discussion. In brief, to continue with a definition of language, one needs to examine its meaning from a multi-disciplined or semantic perspective, that is, an examination of the associated terms.

3.5 Lingua, Lingual, Linguistic, Linguism

From the outset, the above nomenclature stems from the Latin word *lingua*, which means tongue or language. The adjective *lingual*, as noted in *The Oxford English Dictionary* maintains the central meaning of 'tongue' in that it states that it means 'tongue-shaped', but it has also an application in an anatomical and zoological context to mean 'of or pertaining to the tongue, or to any tongue like part'.⁷⁵ Perhaps this particular *Oxford English Dictionary* that has been used in this work thus far ought to have initially noted the Latin origins of the term language. In any event, it is possible to link the Latin origins of the word language, with its derivatives such as those noted above.

3.5.1 Linguist

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term linguist as

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Simpson, J.A., and Weiner, E.S.C., *The English Oxford Dictionary*, op. cit. p. 991.

1. **a.** One who is skilled in the use of languages; one who is master of other tongues besides his own. **b.** One who speaks a (specified) language.
2. A student of language; a philologist.
3. An interpreter.
4. One who uses his tongue freely or knows how to talk; a master of language.⁷⁶

On the one hand it can be observed that the above reference provides a comprehensive explanation of the term 'linguist'. But on the other, it can be argued here that there is a degree of ambiguity in the reference. For instance, in **1.b.** above, it may be understood that if one is bi-lingual, what determines which language is a 'specified' language? In other words, if a German citizen who speaks the dominant language, that is German, but also speaks Sorbian, does this make him or her a linguist? Or if an inhabitant of Poland speaks Wilamowicean, does it render that person a linguist?⁷⁷ It should be apparent here; that the list of such situations where there is cultural heterogeneity is considerable and that it is problematic to determine what constitutes a 'specified' language. The point of this present discussion is to merely demonstrate that to be a linguist, does not mean that it is an exclusive discipline, but rather, *we are all linguists in varying degrees.*

The meaning of linguist that is provided by *Webster's Dictionary*⁷⁸ states it is

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ In southern Poland there is the town of Wilamowice. It is regarded as a linguistic enclave where about one hundred elderly persons speak Wilamowicean. Until 1945, it was the first language and mother tongue for almost all of the inhabitants of the town, rather than Polish. In this instance, it is clear that Wilamowicean is a 'specified' language, compared to Polish. See Wicherkiewicz, T., "The impact of politics and social factors on the death of a minority language (the case of Wilamowicean in Poland)" in tongue for almost all of the inhabitants of the town, rather than Polish. In this instance, it is clear that Wilamowicean is a 'specified' language, compared to Polish. See Wicherkiewicz, T., "The impact of politics and social factors on the death of a minority language (the case of Wilamowicean in Poland)" in *Developing Minority Languages*, Thomas, P.J., and Mathias, J., (eds.) (Cardiff: Cardiff University Gomer Press, 2000), pp. 547-555.

⁷⁸ Webster's Third New International Dictionary, op.cit., p.1316.

- 1: A person accomplished in languages and especially in living languages: who is facile in several languages.
- 2: A student of or experiencing linguistics.⁷⁹

Certainly, the two definitions in the above text may be sufficient *per se*, but in the first instance it converges with the above claim that the knowledge of languages is not restricted to an academic context. In other words, persons who may not have attained a high level of education, or may be stereotypically considered as “unskilled”, can be rightfully regarded as ‘linguists’. For instance, the author has witnessed numerous individuals, in Europe who are bilingual, and are able to speak in some cases, as many as seven different languages. This seems to be further evidence of the weakness in the definition provided by *Webster’s Dictionary* noted above. Thus it can be said here, that the problems with this definition of language and its derivatives result from the notion that language is a human construct.

3.5.2 Linguistic

The word ‘linguistic’ can be understood as being an adjective, and as the subject. By staying with *The Oxford English Dictionary* its definition is

- A. Of or pertaining to the knowledge or study of languages.
Also used for: Of or pertaining to language or language.
- B. The science of languages; philology [sic].⁸⁰

However, so far the definition of linguistic is limited. A common theme that may be identified in this study is that the study of languages is *fragmented*. For instance, one cannot arbitrarily determine the role or function of a linguist. To say that a linguist is an interpreter is a narrow assessment, if not ambiguous. In other words, does someone

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Simpson, J.A., and Weiner, E.S.C., *The English Oxford Dictionary*, op. cit. p. 992.

who interprets official documents, or say, proceedings in a court of law a linguist? Or does their role mean that among other things they interpret language structure and syntax? Certainly, it can be said that in general terms, a linguist is involved with the study of a language or languages. Linguistics or the plural form of linguistic is also a fragmented field.

3.5.3 Sub-fields of linguistics: A brief overview of the terms

The main sub-fields that exist in the study of linguistics are linguistic anthropology, psycholinguistics, linguistic philosophy, linguistic geography, syntax, phonology, phonetics, morphology, semantics and sociolinguistics. In brief, they are different aspects of language. These terms will be defined in brief, using *The Oxford English Dictionary* as a main source of reference. Some of these terms will be grouped together, because as concepts they can be sequentially correlated.

3.5.4 Linguistic analysis

To begin with, linguistic analysis, as the term suggests, is the ‘analysis of language structures in terms of some theory of language’.⁸¹ It also has a meaning in philosophical terms in that it is the ‘analysis of language as the medium of thought’.⁸²

3.5.5 Linguistic anthropology

Linguistic anthropology is defined as ‘anthropological research based on the study of language of a selected group’.⁸³

⁸¹ The Oxford English Dictionary, op.cit. p. 992.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

3.5.6 Linguistic atlas

A linguistic atlas is ‘a set of tables or maps recording regional or dialectal variations of pronunciation, vocabulary, or inflexion forms’.⁸⁴

3.5.7 Linguistic form

Linguistic form is ‘any unit or pattern of speech that has meaning’.⁸⁵

3.5.8 Linguistic geography and linguistic map

Linguistic geography is ‘the study of the geographical distribution of languages [and] dialects’.⁸⁶ It follows that a linguistic map is a graphical representation of such a study. In other words, it is ‘a map in a linguistic atlas; a map showing the distribution of linguistic features’.⁸⁷ It may be useful for present purposes to illustrate this particular kind of linguistic analysis below (Map 1), showing the distribution of Slavonic speakers in Europe.⁸⁸

3.5.9 Dialect

The term *dialect* refers to a way of speaking. It is the language of a country, region or district, which is characteristic but a subordinate language form of a particular group. A dialect is also a language arising from the peculiarities of vocabulary, pronunciation and idiom. For instance, Silesian is a dialect particular to Silesia, but it belongs to the Polish language.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Copied from

<<http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Image:Slavic.jpg>> under GNU Free Documentation License Version 1.2, November 2002, Sighted 11 July 2004.

Map 1: Linguistic map of Slavonic languages



3.5.10 Linguistic psychology, linguistic science, linguistic stock

Linguistic psychology is ‘the study of human psychology through the data provided by language’.⁸⁹ This in turn is differentiated from linguistic science, which is ‘the science of language; the systematic study of linguistic phenomena’.⁹⁰ Finally, linguistic stock refers to ‘the group to which a set of related languages belongs’.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Simpson, J.A., and Weiner, E.S.C., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, op.cit p.992.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

3.5.11 Philology

Philology can be defined as noted above, as being synonymous with the term 'linguistic' to mean the science of languages, but a more complete definition is given in the following,

1. The scientific study of written records (chiefly literary works of art), in order to set up accurate texts and determine their meaning, often in terms of linguistic and cultural history. 2. Linguistics. 3. In popular use, etymology. 4. Formerly, literary scholarship, especially classical scholarship. [*<F philologie <L philologia <Gk. <philologos fond of argument, words < philos fond + logos a word*] [sic].⁹²

3.6 The Function of Language

Earlier in this study concerning language, that is, theorists such as Reber who claims that 'all know the meaning of this term'; the definition of language largely omitted the function of language. It received only a brief reference in that through language 'we convey meaning'. Thus, it needs to be emphasised that the *use of language* is so much taken for granted in everyday life, that certain fundamental aspects are neglected.

Thus, there is an ability of making thoughts intelligible, or understood to one another, there is language. In broad terms, language can take place in different forms, but in this study it is restricted to spoken or articulate speech. Nevertheless, it can be said here that not only is meaning conveyed through language, but also in the first instance language conveys *information*, and it is then that a speaker can either attach meaning to that information or not.

⁹² *Britannica World Language Edition of Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary*, Volume I in two volumes, (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc, 1965), p. 948.

3.7 The Philosophy of Language

The edited compilation by Harnish, *Basic Topics in the Philosophy of Language*, begins by stating that ‘The philosophy of language broadly construed comprises virtually all philosophical theorizing about language’.⁹³ However, contemporary analyses involve ‘a set of core philosophical problems arising out of language’, which are related.⁹⁴ That is, it is difficult to distinguish between ‘some problems in the philosophy of language and problems in linguistics, logic and the philosophy of logic’.⁹⁵ In any event, and for present purposes, the concern here is about the core concepts in the philosophy of language, which involve meaning, reference and truth. As Harnish claims, ‘one of the distinguishing features of philosophical reflections on language is concern with how language relates to the world’.⁹⁶

3.8 Meaning

From the outset, the word ‘meaning’ presents some problems. To begin with, the word ‘mean’ and its cognates have a variety of uses in English and are irrelevant to meaning theory in the philosophy of language.⁹⁷ The following discussion gives an insight into the theoretical tensions that exist. Later, it will illustrate some pragmatic difficulties.

Philosophers such as Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein for instance, were concerned with the problems about representation and the properties of ideal languages, where

⁹³ Harnish, R.M.,(ed.) *Basic Topics in the Philosophy of Language*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994), p. xi.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

forms of sentences mirror the forms of what sentences symbolise.⁹⁸ Austin however, in *How To Do Things With Words* critically referred to the work of Schlick, Carnap and Ayer, who assumed that ‘the business of a [sentence] can only be to “describe” some state of affairs, or to “state some fact”, which it must do either truly or falsely’.⁹⁹ Austin also made it clear that there are various kinds of ‘speech acts’ besides statements.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, Wittgenstein as Bach notes, later ‘came to think of language not primarily as a system of representation but as a vehicle for all sorts of social activity’.¹⁰¹ In brief, Wittgenstein emphasised the use of language, rather than its meaning. Perhaps, here there is a need to separate the theory of linguistic meaning (semantics) from the theory of language use (pragmatics), although they are connected.

3.8.1 Linguistic Meaning and Speaker Meaning¹⁰²

Remaining with Bach’s work, one is enabled to establish a fundamental premise, in that ‘both words and people mean things’.¹⁰³ Thus, there is a clear difference between the meaning of a linguistic expression, that is a word, phrase or a sentence, and what a person means in using it. As Bach puts it,

... although what an expression means is the meaning of the expression, we do not say that what a person means is the meaning of the person. Expressions have meanings; people do not. Expressions have meanings even when they are not being used, but it is only in using expressions that a person means something.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Bach, K., in *Basic Topics in the Philosophy of Language*, Harnish, R.M., (ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994), p. 3.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid. For practical purposes here, this heading has been borrowed from Bach.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 4.

Thus, in using language there is a relationship between speaker meaning and linguistic meaning. Furthermore, one can safely assume that linguistic meaning is a central part of linguistic knowledge. Speakers and hearers communicate with each other so as to be understood and understand, where there is a mutual presumption that they speak the same, but specific language. In simple terms, what a given expression means to one, is the same as what it means to the other. But, it should be borne in mind, that linguistic meaning does not always determine what the speaker means. Thus, a word or an expression can have more than one meaning because of ambiguity.

The ways in which the above can be illustrated is endless, but it does require a brief discussion. Consider the following expressions.

- (1) He will pay for this!
- (2) He gave her the money for the milk.

In (2) it can be understood that there was an exchange of money for an item. Certainly, in (1), as in (2), one is not aware of the entire circumstances of this social activity, but there is no need not to be too preoccupied by this. However, consider that in (1) there was no exchange of money. The linguistic meaning refers to a payment for something, some time in the future (tense). Perhaps, the exclamation mark gives a clue in that it infers an emotion like anger. The word 'pay', linguistically means that there entails a transaction involving a monetary currency. But, because of ambiguity, one may understand or interpret it that an item was not paid for, and the action of theft took place. Another possible meaning is that, the angry speaker of this expression means that the offender will be punished either by procedural means or otherwise.

The offending action may also imply that damage was done to an item or property. As already noted above, one does not know all the details of the situation. The point here is merely to demonstrate the distinctions between linguistic meaning and the meaning intended by the speaker. Similarly, there is some ambiguity in (2), but one may understand this to be a civil arrangement, where the speaker informs the listener that there was a transaction involving money, rather than some sinister behaviour.

It should become apparent that not only is the list of situations endless, but also there may exist a distinction between the intention of the speaker, and recognition of the speaker's utterance. In other words, the intention of the speaker is to have an effect on the listener; it is the meaning of the speaker's intention that may or may not coincide with the linguistic meaning of the expression. But, by the same token, the intention of the speaker may be to convey information, which is recognised by the listener. In brief, the meaning of the language can be a cognitive process, which may become a *belief*.

The above discussion introduces other salient features or properties of language, in that it is flexible, malleable and elastic. In brief, it is not a fixed phenomenon. Perhaps any one of these metaphors is sufficient for giving the sense of a multiplicity of uses that language may possess. Moreover, one becomes aware of language changing in time and place. For instance, the word 'cool' was once readily identified with either a climate or its temperature (particularly weather), but now among sub-cultures or youth, it refers to one's temperament or behaviour. Thus, in a sense one returns to Heidegger's claim at the outset of this chapter, in that 'we are continually lagging behind'...and 'remain entangled in a speaking that is persistently inadequate'.

Finally, it could be argued here that commercialism and therefore some contemporary lifestyles, which can be interpreted as hedonistic, are contributing to language change. Certainly, one is restricted here to comment on the observations made in the case of the English language. In other words, there seems to be what is termed here as a ‘linguistic dyskinesia’. That is, acronyms and abbreviations in language have become accepted by humanity as means for more efficient, or effective communication, and the conveyance of information and meaning. One can extrapolate the above concept of ‘linguistic dyskinesia’ by proposing that it occurs over time due to perhaps the inadvertent or passive side effects of socio-political processes.

3.8.2 Reference

Reference is defined as the relation between a referring expression and that to which it refers.¹⁰⁵ Referring expressions are names or descriptive phrases, such as ‘Adolf Hitler’, or definite descriptions, like ‘the Führer of the Third Reich’. It is possible for different names or descriptive phrases to have the same reference. To borrow an example from Mautner, one might say “‘the evening star’ and the ‘morning star’ both *refer* to the planet Venus, and yet the two phrases do not *mean* the same: we say that their sense (or their meaning) is different.”¹⁰⁶

3.8.3 Truth

Many different kinds of things are said to be true (or false), such as true statements, true sentences, true propositions, true beliefs, to name but few. But what is it for these expressions to be true or false? Can the truth bearers share the same sense that the

¹⁰⁵ Mautner, T., (ed.) *Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1996), p. 475.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. pp. 475-6.

truth (or falsehood) of the others be defined in terms of it? Again, if one were to analyse the concept of truth one is confronted by its connection with meaning and reference. Moreover, one may need to examine the conditions under which a sentence is true are related to the meaning related to the meaning of the sentence so that a theory of truth for a language might be or be a part of a theory of meaning for that language.

3.9 Language death

Language death is when nobody speaks a language as a mother tongue anymore. As Crystal puts it, “‘language death’ sounds as stark and final as any other in which that word makes its unwelcome appearance”.¹⁰⁷ Although the greater part of this chapter thus far has concerned itself with defining and analysing language, it is perhaps ironical that the central hypothesis of this thesis concerns language maintenance or survival. Moreover, it can be said that language death is closely connected with the loss of a cultural and/or ethnic identity.

In 1993, the United Nations’ General Assembly adopted the ‘Endangered Languages Project’, and its report observed that ‘the extinction of languages is progressing rapidly in many parts of the world’.¹⁰⁸ At the International Linguistics Conference in Quebec the previous year, it was declared that ‘the disappearance of any one language constitutes an irretrievable loss to mankind’.¹⁰⁹ The Endangered Language Fund, instituted in the United States in 1995, stated, ‘Languages have died off throughout history, but never have we faced the massive extinction that is threatening the world

¹⁰⁷ Crystal, D., *Language Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. vii.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

right now...we are faced with a stark reality'.¹¹⁰ The Foundation for Endangered Languages was also established in the United Kingdom in 1995. Again, it may be ironic here that these Anglo-American establishments are found in countries that are 'centres' or forces that in way or another, contribute to the globalisation of English.¹¹¹ One can note an analogy through the media that one is exposed to information (usually 'advertising') from institutions such as World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), and Greenpeace, regarding extinct and threatened animal species as well as vegetation.

One could continue with further analysis of language death. But the aim here is to introduce the above concept at this point, both for the purpose of completing the discussion of the definitions, and in an analogous sense of 'preventing language death'. In the latter instance, it should be examined in the context of social and political variables such as, the globalisation of English as a language, world governance (UN), supra-national governance (EU) and nation-state language policies.¹¹² More specifically, it will be concerned with the language policy of the German government in regards to the endangered language of the Sorbs in the following chapter. But first, one needs to examine the Sorbian language itself.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ For a further discussion on the global impact of the English language, see Crystal, D., *English as a Global Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹¹² For a further discussion on language policy and the extinction of Australian aboriginal dialects, see Bostock, W.W., and Rao, S.V., "The Australian National Language Policy" in *Indian Journal of Behaviour*, Volume 14, Number 3, July 1990, pp.1-5.

Part II

The Language of the Lusatian Sorbs

Interestingly, Crystal makes no mention of the Sorbian or Lusatian or Wendish language in his study, *Language Death*. There is no mention or a reference to it as being a member of the Slavonic family of languages. Yet the parallels that exist between say, Irish (that is Gaeltacht, a minority or endangered language) and English, and similarly the Sorbian language in relation to a dominant language, German. This cannot be ignored. If the *status* of the Sorbian language is considered as being endangered, then it is not aided by recent work, such as that found in the *Dictionary of Languages* (1998), where under the appropriate entry the heading states: 'Sorbian – 100,000 Speakers'.¹¹³ The number is a lot less. The following analysis will mainly rely on the work of De Bray,¹¹⁴ Stone,¹¹⁵ Comrie and Corbett.¹¹⁶

3.10 Classification of Languages

One of the difficulties in establishing a fully accurate classification of languages lies in the uneven distribution of the knowledge of their history. In brief, a genealogical classification enables one to identify twenty-six language-groups of the world.¹¹⁷ As Gray puts it,

The relationship of languages are determined chiefly by regular correspondences between their phonology and morphology and in, minor degree, by similarities in the arrangement of words in clauses and sentences, but only in small measure by similarities or identities in vocabulary. Languages showing such correspondences are said to

¹¹³ See Dalby, A., *Dictionary of Languages*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishers, 1998), p.575.

¹¹⁴ De Bray, R.G.A., *Guide to the Slavonic Languages*, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1969).

¹¹⁵ Stone, G., in Comrie, B., and Corbett, G.G., (eds.) *The Slavonic Languages*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Gray, L.H., *Foundations of Language*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), p. 295.

be related, and the linguist is thus led to determine and delimit various language-groups.¹¹⁸

An extensive analysis of language-groups is beyond the scope of this chapter, but for present purposes it is sufficient to note that languages are broadly divided into Indo-European and non-Indo-European groups. Moreover, classifications of the languages of the world have been 'essayed in various ways, especially psychological, typical and genealogical'.¹¹⁹ The Indo-European group has also been termed Aryan, although it is some restricted to the Aryans proper, the Indo-Iranians dwelling in northern India and in the Iranian Plateau.¹²⁰ Interestingly, according to Gray, 'a more common term is Indo-Germanic, because of the fact that members of the family are spoken from the northern part of the Indian Peninsula to Iceland'.¹²¹

The other main classification in the linguistic family is the Hamito-Semitic, or non-Indo-European group. In terms of the geographic distribution of this group, Gray notes the following.

Spoken in the fifth century B.C. throughout Africa north of the Sahara, in the Nile valley and east of the Blue Nile as far as the Equator, in all Arabia, and in Asia and Asia Minor to Mesopotamia, it still retains practically the same area, though some languages belonging to it have vanished, only to be replaced by tongues of cognate stock, especially by Arabic.¹²²

In order to present a simplified representation of the Indo-European group, one can adapt Schleicher's 1866 pedigree-theory, which argues that 'branch-languages sprang

¹¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 295-296.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 299.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 303.

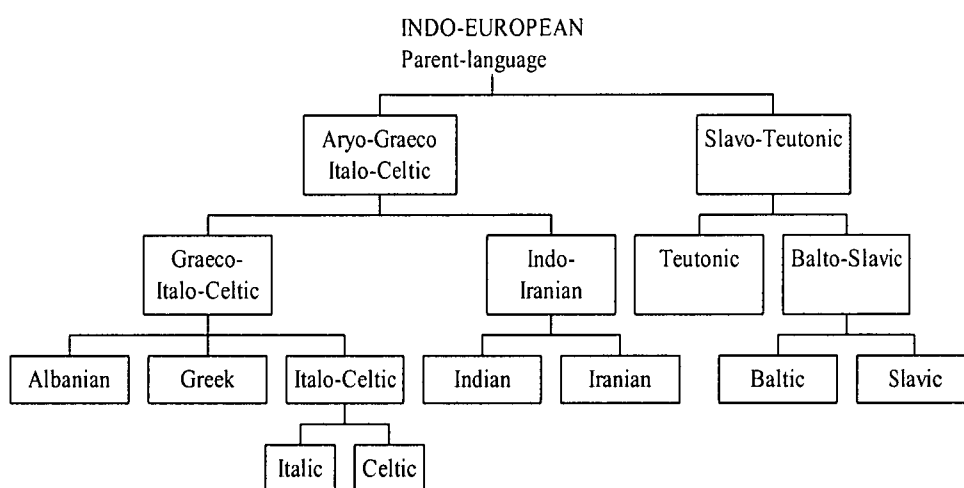
¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid. p. 357.

from a parent stock, from these smaller branches grew, and from the latter sub-dialects bifurcated'.¹²³ This can be graphically represented in the figure below.¹²⁴

Figure 1: Language Branches

Source: Adapted from Schleicher's Pedigree theory



3.10.1 An Overview of the Slavonic Languages

The Slavonic languages (also referred to as the Slavic languages) are the major languages spoken over most of eastern and much of central Europe. The greatest number of speakers of a Slavonic language is found in Russia, which has gradually expanded from its original heartland in eastern Europe across most of northern Asia to the Pacific coast. The Slavonic languages are all descendants of a single ancestor language and form a genetic unit, called the Proto-Slavonic. The characteristics can be compared with other Slavonic languages, which in turn form a branch of the Indo-European family, the family of languages which covers most of Europe and large parts of south-western Asia and south Asia. The Indo-European family of languages

¹²³ Ibid. p. 42.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Adapted from Schleicher, A., 'Pedigree-Theory' of branch-languages.

includes English. To be sure, the Slavonic languages include: Bulgarian, Macedonian, Czech, Slovak, also Serbian and Croatian, Slovene, Upper and Lower Lusatian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian. The Slavonic languages can be naturally and genealogically classified into three groups found in the following.¹²⁵

Table 1: Classification of Slavonic Languages

West	South	East
Polish (including Cassubian)	Bulgarian	Russian
Czech	Serbo-Croat	Ukrainian
Slovak	Slovene	Belorussian
Sorbian (Upper and Lower	Macedonian	
Polabian (now extinct, see below)		

As Stone points out there are other languages, which would be regarded as ‘West Slavonic’ and were once spoken by the inhabitants of the lands lying east of the Elbe before their colonisation and germanisation.¹²⁶ In brief, they have become *extinct* and this point is once again emphasised here under the rubric of *language death*. Although, according to Stone who claims that there has been little linguistic interest in

¹²⁵ Although it is noted in the text above approximately which of the Slavonic languages are located in their respective geographies, the Table provided here has been adapted from Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1972), p.90.
¹²⁶ Ibid.

these extinct languages, there seems to be a genetic relationship between the various West Slavonic languages, which puts them into three sub-groups.¹²⁷ These sub-groups can be summarised by borrowing from Stone as,

- (1.) The Lechitic sub-group, consisting of Polish together with the Cassubian dialects, Polabian, and the so-called 'Baltic Slav' dialects once spoken in the territory to the east of the Elbe.
- (2.) The Czech-Slovak sub-group, consisting of Czech and Slovak.
- (3.) The Sorbian sub-group, consisting of Upper and Lower Sorbian.¹²⁸

Moreover, in many ways the Slavonic languages form a homogenous group within Indo-European, as one of the most distinct characteristics of the Slavonic languages is the presence of a substantial number of palatal and palatalised consonants.¹²⁹

However, one needs to be careful, in that the above list not only refers to a geographical location, but also reflects the contemporary standard literary Slavonic languages, and each of which is the *official* language of an independent country. One of the exceptions is Upper and Lower Lusatian, where it is used locally for official purposes, but German is the national and dominant language. Moreover, the above may also reflect the political situation since the downfall of communism at the beginning of the last decade in the twentieth-century, when previously, Russian was taught as a compulsory language in the former Eastern-Bloc countries.¹³⁰ Another

¹²⁷ Ibid. pp. 90-91.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 91.

¹²⁹ Comrie, B., and Corbett, G.G., (eds.) *The Slavonic Languages*, op.cit. pp. 5-6.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 5. Also, the University of Oxford website states how there was a dramatic increase in the teaching of Slavonic languages at the beginning of the 1950s due to the political climate that existed between the West and the East. See for instance, "Russian and Eastern European Studies at Oxford", <<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~slavinfo/index.html>>.

Sighted 12 December 2001.

It is also interesting to note that Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*, not only refers to social issues such as violence perpetrated by youth gangs, but also Burgess made a prediction that in the light of the Cold War, the Russian language would be an influence in the English language. Although this did not occur, his idea of a changed English

exception can be found in the official status of Cassubian, which may be considered as a dialect of Polish, but at the same time, it is the practice of some Slavists to treat it as a separate language. Similarly, the same argument can be put forward if one is to consider Silesian as a dialect of Polish. Is Silesian a separate language? In any event, Comrie and Corbett include two *extinct* languages to the above group, Old Church Slavonic and Polabian.¹³¹

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to cover the Slavonic languages. Rather, the purpose here is to introduce the salient points, such as phonology, morphology and aspect. These terms are defined below.

3.10.2 Phonology

Phonology is the study of speech-sounds in a language. As already mentioned above, the Slavonic languages are characterised by consonants in which many of them form pairs of palatized (soft) and non-palatized (hard) consonants. Perhaps the extreme case is Russian, according to Comrie and Corbett, 'where almost every consonant participates in this palatalization opposition'.¹³²

3.10.3 Morphology

Morphology is the study of word formation in a language. Comrie and Corbett claim that all Slavonic languages have a rich inflectional morphology, which makes them conservative as Indo-European languages.¹³¹ Some languages have lost some of the

language mirrors the current phenomenon of the language used by youth, particularly in some youth cultures. It can be said that at the time Burgess proposed a futuristic language, and some editions of his novel are accompanied by a glossary. See Burgess, A., *A Clockwork Orange*, (London: Heinemann, 1962).

¹³¹ Comrie, B., and Corbett, G.G., (eds.) *The Slavonic Languages*, op.cit. p. 3.

¹³² Ibid. p.6.

¹³¹ Ibid.

inflectional characteristics found in Proto-Slavonic, for instance Bulgarian and Macedonian, but typically, Slavonic morphology is primarily fusional.¹³² In other words, a given affix frequently combines the expression of a number of grammatical categories.

3.10.4 Aspect

Aspect refers to the usage of verbs as pairs, that is, one member of the pair being an imperfect aspect (such as ‘to see’), the other being of perfect aspect. Aspect is like the tense, in that it is concerned with the general notion of time. However, tense is concerned with locating the situation described by the clause in time, whereas aspect is concerned with the internal temporal structure of situations.

Interestingly, De Bray makes the point that if one knows one Slavonic language, and is approaching another for the first time, then, one knows the new language in outline.¹³³ But, it is important to keep in mind that one would be dealing with

a really different language with different sounds, intonations, rhythms, and a different *historical* and *sociological* background, and different neighbouring influences. In the Slavonic field these languages are different and yet very similar and closely interlinked by linguistic, *social* and spiritual ties. Their literary vocabularies differ more than those in the Romance languages, and the “speech habits” in the conversational languages of the various Slavs are also very distinct. But the basic vocabulary for the ordinary things of everyday life is strikingly similar — a phenomenon which reminds one of the broad similarities of outlook and attitude to life which undoubtedly exists among the Slavs.¹³⁴ (Emphases added).

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ De Bray, R.G.A., *Guide to the Slavonic Languages*, op.cit p. xxiii.

¹³⁴ Ibid. pp.xxiii-xxiv.

3.11 Historical background of the Lusatian language

The Lusatians (Sorbs, Wends) call themselves “Serbja” (Serbs) and their country “Łužica”, in German — Lausitz. Therefore, they should not be confused with the Yugoslav Serbs of Serbia. The Germans call the Lusatians ‘Wends’ or ‘Sorben’, and the language was traditionally called *Wendisch* in German until the Second World War. In the latter instance, *wendisch* has a pejorative tone, though *sorbisch* was also used. The cultural and linguistic support given by the Soviet regime from 1945 has been previously noted. However, it is interesting to note that Stone affirms the distinction by stating that, ‘after the war *sorbisch* was given official support and is now (1993) dominant, though *wendisch* was revived in Lower Lusatia in 1991’.¹³⁵ Furthermore, Stone continues his differentiation by saying that in English *Sorbian* is standard, but *Wendish* also exists.¹³⁶ Certainly there are a number of Lusatian *Germans*, but as explained in Chapter Two, the term Lusatian is used interchangeably with Sorb and Wend, and means a Slav inhabitant of Lusatia. To state the obvious, all Lusatians are bilingual today and the influence of German can be seen in the Lusatian language, particularly in their vocabulary and word order. In brief, it is an autochthonous language community.

Although the process of germanisation has taken place for over a thousand years, there was a brief period of 1002–1032 AD when the Polish king Bolesław Chrobry, incorporated Lusatia in his kingdom by conquest. In the fifteenth century Lusatia came under the Bohemian Crown, under which it remained for three centuries. As noted previously, germanisation was severely applied under Prussian rule, until the unification of Germany under Bismarck. In the Saxon part of Upper Lusatia,

¹³⁵ Stone, G., in Comrie, B., and Corbett, G.G., (eds.) *The Slavonic Languages*, op.cit.p.593.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Lusatians enjoyed a degree of freedom in the nineteenth century, with the Royal House patronising the Sorbs. Thus, literature developed in the nineteenth century far more in the Upper Lusatian dialect than in the Lower Lusatian one.¹³⁷

It has already been alluded to that it is difficult to obtain precise statistics as to the number of Lusatian speakers. Census figures are unreliable due to the pressure put on them to call themselves as German, although in 1880 some 180,000 declared Lusatian as their mother tongue.¹³⁸ By 1938 the total number of Lusatian speakers was estimated at 130,000.¹³⁹ Dalby, among others may be too optimistic when citing his estimate of 100,000 Sorbian speakers. It is of note that Barker also cites the same figure, but goes on to say that the 'most recent estimate has arrived at a figure of 45-50,000 Sorbs, a much lower figure than the 80-100,000 given during the lifetime of the German Democratic Republic' (GDR).¹⁴⁰

3.12 Upper and Lower Lusatian: Two languages or one?

Modern Lusatian is divided into two main literary languages, Upper and Lower Lusatian. These languages are based on two main groups of dialects, centred on Budyšin (Bautzen) and Chóšebuz (Cottbus) respectively. Moreover, as De Bray notes, these dialects are very similar in grammar and vocabulary, but their underlying phonetic basis is rather different, so that the speaker or reader of one dialect does not

¹³⁷ De Bray, R.G.A., *Guide to the Slavonic Languages*, op.cit p.675.

¹³⁸ Ibid. p.674.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ See Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany: The Sorbian Minority and the German State Since 1945*, (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd, 2000), p. 5. Barker goes on to say,

GDR official sources continued to use the figure of 100,000 and blocked attempts to carry out a new survey until 1987. The results of this survey, not published in full until after the political changes in the autumn of 1989, came up with a figure of around 67,000 Sorbian speakers, which was extrapolated from a detailed survey of selected villages. It was estimated that of these only about 25,000 spoke it fluently, and only 45,000 acknowledged their identity as Sorbian. Ibid. p. 21.

always immediately understand a speaker or reader of the other dialect.¹⁴¹ It is argued that with an elementary study of both dialects, one can understand them both without difficulty. Interestingly, De Bray claims that philological studies have shown that the differences between these two dialects seem to have started developing as early as the thirteenth century.¹⁴² Lusatian is considered to be an archaic Slavonic tongue, which still preserves the full use of the Dual number, Aorist and Imperfect tenses.¹⁴³ In brief, historically, Upper Sorbian has been influenced by the Czech language, whilst Lower Sorbian has been influenced by the Polish language.

However, if one refers to Table 1 above, it is noted that the West Slavonic languages are simply and geographically categorised into a single group. But further classification of these languages becomes problematic when this same group is referred to as a Lechitic sub-group consisting of Polish, Polabian, Cassubian, and ‘other... ‘Baltic Slav’ dialects once spoken in the territory to the east of the Elbe’.¹⁴⁴ Stone points out that there has been some controversy surrounding the classification of the Lechitic sub-group, in that ‘its members are not sufficiently closely related to justify the postulation of a single Lechitic linguistic community’.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, as already noted by Stone in the above, there is ‘wide acceptance of the hypothesis’ that the Slavonic languages are further placed into two more sub-groups.¹⁴⁶ The position of Sorbian as a sub-group is not disputed, even though the dialects in the eastern part of the Sorbian speech-area are closely related to the Polish dialects of western

¹⁴¹ De Bray, R.G.A., *Guide to the Slavonic Languages*, op.cit. p.675.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Stone, G., *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*, op.cit. p.91.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Wielkopolska.¹⁴⁷ Interestingly, it seems that archaeological evidence (monuments found east of the River Neisse) ‘has led to the postulation of a zone in which dialects occupying a transitional place between Polish and Sorbian were once spoken’, but there is no evidence to link Sorbian with the Czecho-Slovak sub-group.¹⁴⁸

The above differentiation has been made here in order to give a sense of similarity or a genetic relationship that exists between these particular Slavonic languages. Linguistic similarities that exist between the Slavonic languages beckon little or no argument. But at the same time this discussion is supporting an argument to say that the Sorbian language, whether it is an Upper or Lower Sorbian dialect, constitutes a criterion (amongst others) for now — a *national identity*. In other words, there is no question that the Sorbs are a Slavonic people, but due to historical accidents and/or events, they have their own identity characterised by their culture and language. In the context of this analysis, clearly, they are not German, Polish, Czech, Slovak — but Sorbian.

In brief, the West Slavonic languages share a number of features uniting them and distinguishing them from East and South Slavonic groups, but at the same time Sorbian has also a number of features which distinguish it from the other West Slavonic languages and mark it as a sub-group.¹⁴⁹

Moreover, even though there are many characteristically Sorbian features, which overlap territorially with other West Slavonic languages, in the former instance there

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 92.

are exclusively Sorbian features and highlight its individuality. According to Stone's study, these features may be divided into 'innovations' and 'survivals'.¹⁵⁰

By remaining with Stone's work, one can refer to three innovations.

- (i). In the Czecho-Slovak (sub) group for instance, *o* becomes *ó* making it slightly diphthongal, and this sound change may be likened to that in Polish and Czech where *o* becomes *u* (written *ó* in Polish, and *ů* in Czech); but the conditions under which it occurs are different.
- (ii). In all Sorbian dialects, except those of Mužakow (Muskau) and Slepó (Schleife), the consonant group *-str-* has been simplified to *-tr-*. For instance in Upper Sorbian, *sotra* 'sister', but in Polish it is *siostra*, and in Czech *sestra*.
- (iii). Development of glides before initial vowels. For example, in Upper and Lower Sorbian, *wokoło* 'around', Slepó dialect *hokoło*, but in Polish it is *około*, and *okolo* in Czech.
- (iv). The genitive plural ending *-ow*, which originally was restricted to *u*-stem nouns and is now restricted in most Slavonic languages to nouns of masculine gender, has been extended to nouns of all kinds in Sorbian.¹⁵¹

Under the heading of *survivals*, Stone presents the following features,

- (i). Retention of the dual number in the declension of nouns, pronouns and adjectives, and in the conjugation of verbs. This feature is not shared by all dialects. The only other Slavonic language to retain this category is Slovene.
- (ii). Retention of the aorist and imperfect tenses. Although these tenses are a feature of the standard languages, both Upper and Lower Sorbian, they survive in none of the Lower Sorbian and only in certain Upper Sorbian dialects. That they survive at all is a specifically Sorbian feature, however, since these tenses are otherwise preserved only in the South Slavonic languages.
- (iii). Sorbian is the only West Slavonic language to retain the use of the auxiliary verb in the third person singular and plural (dual) of verbs in the perfect tense. Otherwise this feature is found only in South Slavonic languages. For example, in Upper Sorbian,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p.97.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pp.97-98.

Jan je mi prajil 'Jan told me', but in Polish it is *Jan mi powiedział*.¹⁵²

3.12.1 Lower Lusatian

Modern Lower Lusatian is considered to be in some respects more like Polish, but more unique and more unlike the other Slavonic languages than Upper Lusatian. It retains the original Slav *g* and develops vocalic *l* and *r* similarly; but it has no nasal vowels.

3.12.2 Upper Lusatian

Upper Lusatian is nearer to Czech, but changes the Common Slav *g* to *h*. De Bray maintains that it is still closer to Slovak and Old Czech.¹⁵³ In both dialects 'the stress accent falls on the first syllable of words and word groups, as in Czech and Slovak and in contrast to Polish', according to De Bray.¹⁵⁴ Here lies a discrepancy in De Bray's claim, in that although Polish has a number of accents, it cannot be contrasted with the above as words like Śląsk (Silesia), ślad (trace or track), and also ścieżka, another word for a track, have the first letter accented. The accent on the S/s in the above gives it a soft sound.

Both dialects used (and still use) the Latin alphabet until the end of the seventeenth century, when Protestant (Evangelical) writers adopted the Gothic script. This script is not suited to the Slav languages. However, Catholic writers of Upper Lusatia always retained the Latin alphabet.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 98.

¹⁵³ De Bray, R.G.A., *Guide to the Slavonic Languages*, op.cit. p.676.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

lexical borrowings.¹⁵⁷ Bielfeldt's 1933 study of German loan words is restricted to about 2,000 words in Upper Sorbian, but interestingly Stone estimates that out of a total number of 50,000 Upper Sorbian words, Bielfeldt's selection constitutes about 4 per cent of the total.¹⁵⁸ In colloquial Upper Sorbian, the percentage is higher and furthermore, Stone cites the work of Michalk and Protze, who exclude loan translations and substitutions, maintain that the proportion of nouns of German origin in dialect texts may even exceed 50 per cent.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, in literary varieties of Upper Sorbian the proportion of German loan words does exceed five per cent, apart from international terminology.¹⁶⁰ Stone claims that the proportions of word-loans are similar in Lower Sorbian, but 'the Lower Sorbian literary language is probably a little more tolerant of Germanisms than literary Upper Sorbian'.¹⁶¹ Finally, borrowings from other Slavonic languages are mostly restricted to the literary languages, and are nearly all Czech in origin, constituting about one per cent of the total.¹⁶² Certainly, one must take into consideration cognate words, which are found internationally.

3.13 Conclusion

The term language has several definitions, some of which are broad or lacking specificity. For instance, if one chose to adapt Vendryes's definition, which states that 'the most general definition of language that can be given is that it is a system of signs',¹⁶³ then such a definition does not disclose much at all. Further, if one continues with Vendryes's analysis by saying that to study the origin of language

¹⁵⁷ Stone, G., in *The Slavonic Languages*, Comrie, B., and Corbett, G.G., (eds.) op.cit. p.674.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 674.

¹⁶³ Vendryes, J., *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History*, op.cit. p. 7.

means to look for the 'particular signs naturally at man's disposal and the manner in which he has led to employ them', and then this is also an inadequate explanation.¹⁶⁴

However, Vendryes alludes to a more complex study when he refers to the symbols or signs as being 'capable of serving as means of communication between men'.¹⁶⁵ It follows that there are many different signs that we can employ, and that any sense organ may serve to create a language. To be sure, there is olfactory, tactile, visual and auditory language. Certainly, one can add to the above modes of language such as gesture(s), body language and other variants, such as the Morse code, or even smoke signals. Further, there is language whenever individuals use a certain sense to an act and perform this act with the view to communicate with each other. But, among the different languages, perhaps the most important one is auditory language, because of the variety of expressions it provides. Auditory language is also called spoken or articulate language.

This study demonstrated the difficulty in separating the study of the origins of language from language acquisition. On the one hand, there is no specific organ for language, other than the brain. But on the other hand, humans unlike other species (for instance other primates) use a number of organs such as the pharynx, larynx, vocal cords and tongue, to produce a sound, which in turn becomes speech. Certainly, other species in the animal kingdom produce sounds, but it is humans that express themselves through language, which has meaning. The evolutionary process (that is, the development of the mechanisms or the physiology speech) is just one explanation for language acquisition. In other words, adaptation by the human species has been

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

necessary for survival and language is another ‘mechanism’ that is used for survival. Thus, writers such as Pinker have argued the concept of a language instinct. At the same time however, Chomsky asserts that language acquisition can be attributed to humans being endowed with an innate system of intellectual organisation, which results through ‘interaction’.

Once again Pinker’s thesis, *The Language Instinct* is not a complete explanation for language. Ochs for instance, using the work of Vygotsky, argues about the interdependence of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. In brief, knowledge, which can be broken down into two components perception and conception are also variables, and together with cultural and social conditions can account for language acquisition.

As this chapter progressed, the definition of language became more sophisticated in that *The Oxford English Dictionary* defined language as ‘the whole body of words and of methods of combination words used by a nation, people, or race’. It resonates with *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* especially where it refers to language as an identity marker of ‘a people or a nation as distinguished by its speech’. This is the definition that will be used throughout this thesis, and it is in this context that it introduces and discusses issues such as threatened and extinct languages, language death, and the analysis of language policy, both nationally and supra-nationally. In other words, this chapter provides a pivotal basis for a later analysis of Sorbian in the context of linguistic globalisation, to which can be added the concept of linguistic dyskinesia, as a symptom of economic, social, and political processes.

However, before embarking on a study of the latter topics noted above, one first needs to isolate the Sorbian language in the context of an ethnic identity marker, as well as differentiating it from the other Slavonic languages. This in turn has also raised the question whether Sorbian is one language or two languages (Upper and Lower Sorbian). Moreover, the available literature has indicated that Lower Sorbian resembles Polish, and Upper Sorbian resembles the Czech language. But, at the same time, Sorbian has exclusive features that make it an individual and different from other Slavonic languages.

Chapter 4

*A man can change his language without any trouble — that is, he can use another language; but in his new language he will express the old ideas; his inner nature is not changed.*¹⁶⁴

Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*

4.0 Introduction

Hitler's idea as cited above must be placed into the context of his anti-Semitism. It also had relevance to any ethnic, or more precisely, any non-German group living within and with out the boundaries of what was the Third Reich. Among others, this included the Slavonic peoples. But in 1945, after the defeat of the Nazi regime, it would seem that there was a complete reversal of sentiment and policy regarding an ethnic minority such as the Sorbs, in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). But first, it will be useful to outline the events and the reasons that led to a politically divided Germany, not to mention a divided Europe. In brief, the ideological antagonisms within continental Europe became a global phenomenon referred to as the Cold War, an ideological clash between the West and East or the clash between liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism.

In Chapter Two, its historical survey outlined the events towards the end, and after World War II in relation to the Sorbs of Lusatia. In order to acquire a better understanding of the contemporary language policy concerning an ethnic minority in a unified Germany, one needs to discuss the political history of the post-war period. In

¹⁶⁴ Hitler, A., *Mein Kampf*, translated by Manheim, R., (London: Pimlico, 1969), p.283.

other words, it may be useful to examine the language policy of the former GDR, or East Germany. Thus, a comparative approach in such an analysis will enable one to assess Germany's language policy since re-unification. Moreover, a comparative method here and later will provide an insight into the chances of the Sorbs' survival as the smallest Slavonic nation in Europe. The latter study will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

Thus, it may be useful to try to present some theoretical basis for the significance of language usage by a nation or ethnic group, which in this study becomes a language policy adapted by a dominant group. In this instance, the dominant group is German. This chapter will explore the idea of patriarchal figures having influence upon the building of a nation's identity, and to a lesser extent, its culture. Nonetheless, an examination of some historical phases, such as the Romantic period, experienced by the Germans and the Sorbs, will attempt to ascertain the degree to which literature, to name just one aspect of the period, impacted upon the development of a national identity and consciousness. In order to have broader appreciation of the Sorbs' experience, this chapter will also briefly examine the Czech and Polish experiences. This may provide a better understanding of not just the Sorbs' consciousness as an ethnic group, but also an overview of Slavonic consciousness, even though the study is limited to the above national groups. Moreover, the geographical proximity of the above groups, and the consequent historical events cannot be ignored.

4.1 The German Language: Towards an explanation in terms of national character

It is often said that certain nationalities are supposed to possess certain 'behavioural' characteristics, such as arrogance, pride, or perhaps chauvinism. Indeed, it can be argued that these perceptions are erroneous and are no more than myths constructed in order to give 'the other' a sense of 'this is not what or who we are'. In other words: an identity. For instance, it is often said that the Scots are shrewd with money, the Jews (although not necessarily a nationality) are depicted as being gifted in entrepreneurial skills, the Dutch or the French as being arrogant, and so on. At the same time, however, it is possible for a black African or say, an Indian or an American, or some other nationality or ethnic group to have all of these characteristics or 'personality' traits. Similarly, it may be erroneous to say that only Serbs or Croats among others are nationalistic. Certainly, the *collective psyche* and therefore the *collective behaviour* of a group of people can be regarded or categorised as nationalistic, racist or some other characteristic.

It is interesting how Radosavljevich, author of *Who Are The Slavs* describes a German perception of the Slavs in the following,

Many German authors claim that modern civilization, like that of the ancients, built itself up almost independently of the Slav. They claim that the Slav is inferior culturally to other people, because of the following reasons: 1. The number and size of their battleships is small; 2. Their financial prosperity is miserable; 3. The capacity of the Slavic men is poor; 4. Their carelessness in manners, dress, and business is great; 5. They show the largest figures of illiteracy, and so on.² [sic].

² Radosavljevich, P.R., *Who Are The Slavs: A Contribution to Race Psychology*, (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1919), Volume I in two Volumes, pp. 136-137.

However, Radosavljevich promptly refers to among others, Copernicus's scientific achievement in *De Revolutionibus Orbium Terrarum* (1543), which rejected Ptolemy's explanation of the movement of the planets by the theory of epicycles.³ In describing Slavonic traits, Radosavljevich continues by stating that 'One of the characteristic traits of Slavic mentality is Love for the Truth'.⁴ Clearly, to make such a generalisation is both inadequate and flawed. Radosavljevich further attempts to explain the character of the Slavs by claiming

The Slavic nature is, no doubt, due both to his inherent psychophysical traits and to the bigness and variety of his environment, which is either *physical* (geographical region of living, topographical peculiarities, climate) or *mental*; this might be due (1) to unconscious or subconscious mind which correspond to the *Zeitgeist* or herd instinct — it is from this mental environment that fashions, customs, conventions and other ethnic compositions have their rise, and (2) to the vivid awaking consciousness of individual or collective body of a nation [sic].⁵

Yet it should be noted here, that humanity could be considered as being 'subdivided' into geographical, continental, national, political communities, which throughout history seem to have always given a human persona to its national or ethnic boundaries. In sociological terms, this is referred to as reification. What comes to mind immediately, as an illustration is that, societies have awarded their respective nation(s) a parental role — either a Motherland or a Fatherland. Terms like 'Mother Russia' (мать Россия) and Germany's *Vaterland* (Fatherland) are just two examples

³ Ibid. p. 138.

⁴ Ibid. p. 150.

⁵ Ibid. p. 263 in Volume II.

of not only just constructing a nation as a human entity, but also it implies the notion of a family. Whether there is a conceptual connection with the idea of the world consisting of the 'human family', one cannot say. In any event, the idea of a nation expressed as a family in this sense mirrors the same processes that occur within a nuclear family. Although, it needs to be stated that in a general context, political and social constructs such as parental and/or gender entities such as Fatherland and Motherland, are also symbolic, if not metaphoric. Thus, the following linguistic terms or connotations in the following analysis imply nationhood as feminine activities. For now, it may be useful to refer to this phenomenon as 'gender allocation'. In a socio-political context, gender allocation may serve rhetorical or propagandistic purposes. In any event, certain problems arise, as the following discussion will reveal.

The citizens of a nation are tacitly its children. Some illustrations of this are both expressed and witnessed in events such as the *birth* of a nation, for instance East Timor in 2002 or the unification of Germany in 1871. Similarly, the *rape* of a nation is a literal metaphor used to describe the rape of not only a nation's women, it also happens as a part of war, plunder and destruction. But, as alluded to in the above, such an analogy of using the terms 'birth' and 'rape', in the gender allocation of a nation, that is, say a Fatherland seems to be contradictory. The rape of men, by men in war and in peace, takes place, notwithstanding marked numerical differences in the incidence between the genders.

Further problems, if not confusing aspects of the terms: nation, *Heimat* (homeland), Domowina (homeland), *ojczyzna* (homeland), and often simply, 'home', are used interchangeably, synonymously in a variety of contexts. Thus, it argues here that the

above terminologies, referred to by Germans, Sorbians, or Poles, among others, suggest a psychological dimension of collective comfort, security and belonging.

The *death* of a nation in a linguistic sense could mean the death of the mother tongue, which is achieved by processes of invasion, colonisation, and eventual assimilation of the subordinate populace. Therefore, it should become apparent that collective or national behaviour could mirror the familial (but on a microcosmic scale) and human behaviour of paternal chauvinism, rebellion (say among siblings (civil war or fratricide)) and bellicosity, to name just few.

Moreover, the head of a state may represent the parent figure or role of a nation, and even become its national or even cultural as well as its political icons. For instance, in cases where a nation has newly acquired independence, the phrase 'the father of a nation' may have some currency, if a particular key figure in a struggle is a male. Also, history witnessed heads of state who have declared themselves *to be the state*, and illustrations of this are easily found in such persons as Frederick the Great, de Gaulle, Stalin, Hitler and more recently Saddam Hussein. Often, heads of state or a nation are seen as strong leaders and paternalistic in the same sense as a father being the head of the household with power, authority, resources and control at his disposal. Of course, this is assuming that all heads of state are male. Although, at the same time it is acknowledged here that it is possible for a matriarchic role to manifest itself under the direction of a female head of state, as well the acknowledgement of the changing structure of the family in many western societies.

In any event, we can extrapolate this parental notion to include other 'father figures' in the context of being transmitters of language — the mother tongue in literature and culture. Or, these paternal protagonists may act as guardians or defenders of culture and national heritage. They are also seen as the transmitters of what it means to be Polish, Czech, German or Sorbian. In this endeavour they attempt to express the soul or spirit of the nation. In another sense the above implies the emotions of a nation. The latter is apparent when a nation has a history of repression and its fathers attempt to express hope in Messianic terms.

As the latter implies, such writers or intelligentsia refer to a resurrection of the suffering nation. It may be useful here to examine this national expression or emotion in both the Slavonic (Polish, Czech, and Sorbian) and Germanic experiences. (The Polish and Czech experiences are included in this study here because of their geographical proximity to Germany, and the aforementioned linguistic influence on the Sorbs. Also, it may be useful to provide a basic understanding of the Slavonic collective psyche in contrast to the Germanic one). Certainly, this comparative analysis will remain limited as it is beyond the scope of this chapter or study to include all the Slavonic groups or nations.

At the same time however, literature and art, or cultural markers are not the only entities that constitute a period or a process that is referred to as 'romanticism'. Also, leaders may be perceived as contributors to a national identity, and have been associated with a romantic quality in the context of the political or social events at the time. For this reason it may be also useful to first define the term 'romanticism'.

4.2 Defining romanticism

Romanticism got its name from the French term “roman” which means a modern literary form whereby imagination and emotionality prevailed over common sense and rationality. In broad terms, the conceptual structure of romantic thinking and its history, ‘romanticism’ can be identified ‘with a belief in the cardinal role of art in human life, and a claim to its paradigmatic function for the understanding of all cultural and social phenomena’.⁶ In brief, these new conceptions of art and artistic creation arose initially from a revolt against a particular strand of eighteenth-century rationalism: neo-classicist aesthetics.⁷ Another definition puts it as,

Romanticism was an attitude or intellectual orientation that characterized many works of literature, painting, music, architecture, criticism, and historiography in Western civilization over a period from the late 18th to the mid-19th century. Romanticism can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality that typified Classicism in general and late 18th century Neoclassicism in particular. It was also to some extent a reaction against the Enlightenment and against 18th-century rationalism and physical materialism in general. Romanticism emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental.⁸

As Vögel notes, this critique first arose in Germany and the term ‘romantic’ was ‘self-consciously used to differentiate the characteristic attributes of ‘modern’ poetry from

⁶ Vögel, U., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Miller, D., Coleman, J., Connolly, W., and Ryan, A., (eds.), (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1991), p. 435.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “Romanticism”, (author not cited),
< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism#Art_and_Literature >.
Sighted 11 July 2004.

those supplied in the model of classical antiquity'.⁹ But surely, the romantic strand of thought is not confined to a group of discontented artists and literalists, who rejected the major postulates of Enlightenment rationalism, or modernity as such. Moreover, Vögel continues with her definition of romanticism by stating

For the same reasons for which it opposed uniformity of standards in the evaluation of cultural phenomena, it turned against the methodological foundations of the Newtonian paradigm of scientific knowledge: romantic thinkers dismissed the achievements of modern physics and of associationist psychology because the search for general laws, premised upon the quantifiability and calculability of all subject matter, rendered only an impoverished, abstract notion of human persons and could give no account of the intimate and emotive quality of the relationships that bound them to nature and to each other.¹⁰

Thus far this definition is void of any political thought, content or implication. The deeper aspects of romanticism begin to unravel when one considers Adam Müller (1773-1825), Coleridge and Carlyle who are noted for their criticism of the methods of classical political economy as reducing the human aspect of economic life to a mere system of cash nexus.¹¹ Further, all romantic thinkers considered that the simple contractual model of political obligation found in liberal and democratic arrangements was flawed.¹² Rather, the romantics gave individuality and diversity supreme value, and condemned the move towards bureaucratic rationalisation, which was 'manifest in the machine-like state of Frederick's Prussia'.¹³

⁹ Vögel, U., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, op. cit. p.453.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Vögel's treatment of the political properties found in Romanticism cannot be ignored. Rather, one begins to identify some political insights concerning the German romantic thought by staying with Vögel's investigation, which claims

However, as far as actual political commitments are concerned, romanticism cannot be equated with conservatism and *reactionary nationalism*. The predominance of aesthetic values in romantic thinking ensured a flexible - or, as has sometimes been argued, an essentially apolitical - disposition, which could align itself with any ideological stance between the poles of revolution and reaction. Thus in Germany, due mainly to the effective polemics of the Young Germans and the Young Hegelians, romanticism became virtually synonymous with the reactionary policies of the Metternich era.¹⁴ (Emphases added).

Thus, it should be apparent that the concept of romanticism presents a theoretical duality, ambiguity and political uncertainty. In other words, as Engelhardt describes it as a *Doppelgänger*, or split (double) personalities.¹⁵ In brief, it can be said that romantic thought oscillated between utopian and reactionary elements. However, perhaps more importantly, is that despite the buoyancy of romantic idealism, romantic writers have contributed to modern European political thinking.¹⁶ Interestingly, romanticism could not accept the separation of public and private spheres, which is fundamental in liberal democratic political theory.¹⁷ Moreover, romanticism considered that the state could not be considered a 'guarantor of individual rights nor as an instrumental device for the promotion of social happiness' [sic].¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 453-454.

¹⁵ Engelhardt, D., in *Romanticism in National Context*, Porter, R., and Teich, M., (eds.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 121.

¹⁶ Vögel, U., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, op. cit. p.454.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Particular events in France, such as the French Revolution, initially perceived as the harbinger of social transformation, were soon followed by disillusionment as nothing more than a 'political' revolution affecting the formal arrangements of social life by the framework of law and government — in other words, state institutions.¹⁹ Romantic thinking made an impact upon the idea of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and later political doctrines in that it diverged from the 'total identification of the individual with the whole — without reference to the constitutional guarantees of individual rights or to active participation in the institutions of the state'.²⁰ Rather, as Vögel argues, the notion of 'community' inspired

... feelings of loyalty, fellowship and belonging by welding together different types of social relationships: the intimacy of friendship and love; the personal character of obligations characteristic of small groups; the emotive bonds of a common religious faith; and the strength of patriotic feelings.²¹

Furthermore this sense of community, which the romantics adhered to, is extended by Novalis's famous essay *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (Christianity or Europe). It called for not so much for the return of a golden age, but rather that Europe 'be united by a common faith — analogous to but not identical with, medieval Catholicism'.²² In brief, romantic thinking favoured feudal arrangements, which at the same time allowed it to depict the 'destructive effects of modern commercialism and industrialism', behind the façade of espousing equal rights.²³ Novalis's work is

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. p. 454.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

neither an article on empirical medieval historiography, but a representation of an ideal, which is also a pattern for the future development of Europe.²⁴

4.3 Romanticism and nationalism

There seems to be conflicting assessments as to whether the Romantic Movement had a direct link with nationalism. According to Scholes for instance, 'a fertilization of music by poetry, fiction, philosophy, and painting took place, and with it was associated a further fertilization by the spirit of nationalism'.²⁵ At the end of Napoleonic domination in Europe, Weber, Schumann, and Wagner 'were definitely conscious of expressing the German spirit, and Chopin of expressing the passionate rebelliousness of an enslaved Poland'.²⁶ Furthermore, Scholes continues his argument by claiming that a 'more conscious expression of national feeling, and the deliberate adoption, to that end', was found in the melodic and rhythmic idiom of folk song and folk dances.²⁷ However, it should be noted here, that demands for national self-determination, political unity and military strength cannot be arbitrarily equated to nationalism.

Vögel, on the other hand, notes that in considering the links between romanticism and nationalism it should be acknowledged that the

... romantic idea of nation, with its emphasis upon cultural rather than political factors, bore as yet little resemblance to the quest for power and self-aggrandizement prominent in later nationalist ideologies.²⁸

²⁴ Engelhardt, D., in *Romanticism in National Context*, op.cit. p. 117.

²⁵ Scholes, P.A., *The Oxford Companion to Music*, 10th ed. Ward, J.O., (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 887.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 888.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 673.

²⁸ Vögel, U., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, op. cit. pp.454-455.

Moreover, many misunderstandings and misinterpretations were later made of Romantic thinking on history and society, 'of which National Socialism is the most notorious'.²⁹ Similarly, Vögel makes the point that focus on the causes of fascism, racism and militarism — undoubtedly provided insights into the processes through which the romantic critique of nationalism, the polemical opposition of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, and organicist conceptions of the state and nation, could be adapted to serve the goals of anti-modernist and anti-liberal ideologies.³⁰ Perhaps one of the lasting achievements of romantic thinking lies in the impetus, which it gave to the comparative study of languages and cultures across a wide spectrum.

4.4 Polish Romanticism

Polish Romanticism can be found during the 'Polish Revolution' when Pirie refers to the Romantic insurrectionaries, (who were also crusaders for equality and freedom) 'sang songs of their mythical patrons who guided their every move'.³¹ Moreover, this concept is illustrated in Rajnold Suchodolski's *Polonaise*, which proclaims

Look down on us, Kościuszko, from heaven. When we wade in our
enemies' blood: We need your sword now. To liberate the
fatherland!³²

However, writers like Maurycy Mochnacki in 1830 note his rejection of writing for the 'glory of battle in the foreword to his masterpiece of Romantic criticism', *On*

²⁹ Engelhardt, D., in *Romanticism in National Context*, op.cit. p. 118.

³⁰ Vögel, U., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, op. cit. p.455.

³¹ Pirie, D., *Romanticism in National Context*, op.cit. p. 327.

³² Ibid.

Polish Literature in the Nineteenth Century.³³ Instead, he claims that 'literature is a nation's conscience', thus underlining the connection between national awareness and literature.³⁴ Later in 1833, Mickiewicz (1798-1855) wrote the poem, *Forefather's Eve*, as 'a personal analogy of the suffering that followed the collapse of the Uprising'.³⁵ As Pirie points out, this Polish myth of a national resurrection is perhaps the most powerful of all the ideas in the 'Romantic paradigm of personal and collective response to colonial domination'.³⁶ Similarly in music, the contributions of Chopin are particularly noted in the *Polonaise* (in German *Polonäse*). The *Polonaise* is one of the national dances of Poland, which in the hands of Chopin (1810-1839) was made to express patriotism and the pent-up national feeling of an exile from an oppressed fatherland.³⁷ Thus, it needs to be said that romantic literature exerted a powerful influence on music in its day; Chopin by his national poet Mickiewicz, and this was also witnessed in the German experience (see below).

4.5 Romanticism in Germany

German Romanticism according to Von Engelhardt was important only for a short period, from 1797 to the 1830s, 'varying in length for different arts and sciences, varying in intensity between individual German states and university towns'.³⁸ Moreover, Von Engelhardt claims that Romanticism in Germany 'does not only refer

³³ Ibid. p. 328.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 330.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Scholes, P.A., *The Oxford Companion to Music*, op.cit. p. 819. It should be noted that romanticism is not necessarily confined to say, late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. For instance, the piano piece, *Warsaw Concerto*, was composed a 'requiem' for a city — namely Warsaw, which was razed during the bombing by the German Luftwaffe in 1939.

³⁸ Engelhardt, D., in *Romanticism in National Context*, op.cit. p. 109.

to literature, painting and music, but equally to science, history, religion and life' and that it is universal.³⁹

There are three phases of Romanticism, above all in literature, that are considered in the German Romanticism. The first phase is known as Early or Old Romanticism. Wackenroder and Tieck initiated this phase in their published work *Outpourings from the Heart of an Art-Loving Monk* in 1797, on the theory of art.⁴⁰ The second phase, also known as the Later Romantic, High Romantic or Middle Romantic phase lasted until 1815. Due to its geographical concentration, it also earned the name Heidelberg Romanticism, although Dresden, Berlin and Munich were also centres of influence during this phase.⁴¹

As the influence of philosophers on literature decreased, music, painting, history and science came to the fore, leading to the third or the Late Romantic phase, which lasted until the 1830s and in part as late as the 1840s and 1850s.⁴² Interestingly, Silesia, as well as Nuremburg, Berlin, Munich, Swabia 'were local and regional foci, where alongside literature and art, works of scientific research, medicine, history, society and religion in the Romantic spirit also appeared'.⁴³ Around 1800 Goethe observed that the complex origins of the genuine Romantic Movement in Germany could be summarised as,

For us Germans, the move towards Romanticism started from education acquired first from the ancients, then from the French; it

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 110.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

was aided by Christian attitudes and fostered and encouraged by gloomy Northern epic sagas.⁴⁴

For the record here, Engelhardt's study of "Romanticism in Germany" conveniently organises this topic by the following headings: Premises, Nature, History, Faith, Art and Literature, Life and Conclusion. An extensive detailed analysis of each of the above sections is not needed here. Rather, the following discussion will attempt to cover the most salient points across all the above. For obvious reasons, greater focus will be drawn on those of a historical and political content, and keeping in mind the linguistic ramifications of national identity, national psyche, and national character. Such a study has also involves or employs an analysis of underlying collective psychoanalytic currents for both methodological and assessment reasons.

In any event, art and literature always was always accompanied with reflection.⁴⁵ Thus, the romantics gave a valuable contribution to the theory and criticism of art and literature. This is observed in the works of Friedrich Schlegel expressed in 1808: 'The distinguishing characteristic of modern writing is its close relationship to criticism and theory, and determinative influence of the latter'.⁴⁶ In brief, the works of the Schlegel brothers and Novalis for instance, presented convincing reflections on the nature of art, its relationship to life, science and faith.⁴⁷

At the same time, it needs to be said that in Germany, the Romantic Movement did not represent an intellectual movement. Romantic thinking was about a combination

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 120.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

of spirit and life, of universe and the individual.⁴⁸ Even though the focus of discussion here is meant to be about Germanic Romanticism, it is still possible to expose elements or features of romanticism, which can be easily assigned to the purposes of defining the term/concept. The German experience however, is remarkable in that its romanticism is ‘universal, encyclopaedic in a specific sense, combining totality and individualism, empiricism and metaphysics, history, the present and utopias’.⁴⁹

It is of note here to examine the way Romanticism views *history*. In specific terms there is no reference to German or a national history. Nor is it regarded as merely archival work or an account of the past.⁵⁰ Rather,

... it provides concrete rules for not so much for living, or specific instructions for *political behaviour*, as an understanding of the march of time and world events; it helps one find sense in the past and allows individuals to find a niche for themselves and their existence in the flow of universal development.⁵¹(Emphases added).

Moreover, the work of Novalis noted above gives an understanding of not just a romantic view of history. In a sense Novalis provides one with perhaps one of the earliest imaginations of a European community — a conceptual, but an embryonic forerunner of the present arrangement known as the European Union. Certainly, this is on the one hand a speculation, but on the other as Engelhardt argues, ‘Friedrich Schlegel would like to see France and Germany — like the examples of Rome and

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 122.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 109.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 115.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Greece in ancient times — develop a relationship of mutual cooperation and fulfilment'.⁵²

Once again the duality or *Doppelgänger* of Romanticism and its idealism is evident that the above can be seen as the separation and or combination of nationalism or cosmopolitanism, together with Novalis's aspiration to overcome national rivalries in a Christian Europe.⁵³ August Wilhelm Schlegel, brother of Friedrich spoke of 'European patriotism', which was conceived amidst Napoleonic expansionism and nationalistic feelings. Thus, in turn, the Romantics too joined in the 'war of liberation'.⁵⁴ In brief, their idealistic commitment is always overtaken by day-to-day political reality, as concepts of society and political commitments vary considerably between individual Romantics, and change with time.⁵⁵ For instance, Friedrich Schlegel supported Metternich's politics, while Eschenmayer legitimated the Württemberg Constitution according to natural philosophy.⁵⁶

Although it is not possible to examine all the Romantics, it should not be overlooked that they 'owe much of their view of history to one of their most important forerunners, Herder'.⁵⁷ In Herder's *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, (Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Humanity) (1784), 'he had pointed to the inner meaning of history and looked at the human history with that of nature, seeing a spiritual design in the fate of the whole world'.⁵⁸

⁵² Ibid. p. 117.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Eriksson, G., "Romanticism in Scandinavia" in *Romanticism in National Context*, op. cit. p. 181.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

4.6 Czech Romanticism

Czech literature written in Old Church Slavonic dates back to the tenth century during the time of Saint Wenceslaus. Interestingly, it seems that Czech Romanticism began earlier than some of its counterparts. The Thirty Years War (1618-48) 'brought wholesale destruction of Czech literary works followed by repression of national life'.⁵⁹ During the fifteenth century however, there was a 'poetic flowering that paralleled increasing *national consciousness*'.⁶⁰ (Emphases added).

The language reforms of Jan Hus assisted the Czech language during the Renaissance, in that it became an *effective literary language* in the writings of humanists, in religious and secular writings of Moravian Bishop Jan Blahoslav (1503-71) and in the histories of Veleslavin (1545-99). Between 1579 and 1593, the Czech Brethren translated and published the *Kralice Bible*, which made this the crowning glory of the age.⁶¹ In the seventeenth century the language was gradually reduced to a little more than a peasant dialect.⁶² Philologists like Josef Dobrovsky and Josef Jungmann helped rehabilitate writing in Czech in the late eighteenth century. Jan Koll led the Pan-Slavonic revival in the early nineteenth century, while Karel Hynek Mácha, considered the foremost Czech poet, expressed a Byronic-romanticism developed further by novelist Božena Němcová and the poet Karel J. Erben.⁶³ Furthermore, according to the *Columbia Encyclopaedia*, Pan-Slavism and romanticism dominated Czech literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, thus highlighting Slavonic scholarship.

⁵⁹ "Czech Literature" in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed., (author not cited), p. 1, < <http://bartleby.com/65/cz/Czechlit.html>>.

Sighted 27 March 2003.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

The Czech National Revival in the 1820s, which was confined to small scholarly circles of patriotic intelligentsia later became a matter of the whole nation in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1830, the Czechs realised that Russia was not a “kind Slavonic brother” after the crushing of Polish uprising, and saw it as an imperialist power. Writers such as Karel Havleek, who had witnessed Russian despotism, coined a new concept of “Slavonic” nationalism. As a result of the above events, the Czech aim was to ‘create literature, which would fully correspond to the contemporary interests and needs of the nation’.⁶⁴ The latter is in contrast to the practice of expressing music, literature and art in exotic terms, which was an obsession of the nineteenth century.

However, as revolution swept Europe, there was an atmosphere of apathy in the 1830s amongst the Czech middle class or bourgeois classes. The literature at that time depicted the above in stories ‘as ordinary little people with petty interests, quarrels, [and] undemanding entertainment’.⁶⁵ This attitude and the way of life was called *biedermeier*, a German expression which mocked the apolitical and cowardly times after Napoleon’s defeat in 1815. In brief, the placid atmosphere in Czech literature in the 1830s was disrupted by a few supporters of Romanticism, among them its founder, Karel Hynek Mácha. The attempts to educate people so that they became nationally aware resulted in mediocrity.⁶⁶ Other noteworthy composers include Antonin Dvořák and Bedrich Smetana. Once again, according to this source,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

'nationalism became a driving force in the later Romantic period, with composers trying to express their cultural identity through their music'.⁶⁷

4.7 Sorbian Romanticism

There are several instances in this thesis thus far, which allude to the historical, cultural and linguistic links that Lusatian Sorbs have with their Czech and Polish neighbours. The following discussion attempts to not only establish a historical and linguistic pattern shared by these Slavonic nations, but also help one identify the features of Sorbian Romanticism and its influence on the concept of national identity.

To begin with, the birth of Sorbian literature came with the Reformation and the need for the translation of religious texts. The first Lower Lusatian manuscript and its subsequent translation, was that of the New Testament in 1548 by M. Jakubica. Germans were the first to introduce Christianity to the Lusatians, but there were later influences such as the Cyrillo-Methodian and Polish missions when Lusatia was briefly united with Poland in the eleventh century. From that time until the Thirty Years War Lusatia came under the control of the Czech crown. In brief, in the thirteenth century the area was divided into Lower and Upper Lusatia, and the Reformation further cemented this separation when most of Lower Lusatia, together with the German population adopted Lutheranism, while Upper Lusatia remained Catholic.

⁶⁷ "A Brief History of Music – Romantic", (author not cited), p.1,
 < <http://archiv.radio.cz/hubda/romantic.html>>.
 Sighted 27 March, 2003.

The first Lower Lusatian book printed is Albin Moller's *Zpevník a katechism* (hymnal and catechism) in 1574. The first Upper Lusatian printed book was a translation of Luther's *Little Catechism* of Warichius in 1595. By now, one should begin to identify the similarities that exist between the development of Czech and Sorbian literature. In other words, religion, or the Church dominated the first or early literature in each experience.

Later, in the nineteenth century however, Pan-Slavism, which was influenced by the French Revolution and German Romanticism, 'also awakened an awareness of a Sorbian national identity and greatly influenced Sorbian literary development'.⁶⁸ It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that Sorbian poetry began to flourish and was mostly published in periodicals. Handrij Zejler, one of the major Upper Lusatian poets of the time had his works published in journals and also his grammar titled *Kurzgefasste Grammatik der sorbenwendischen Sprache nach dem Budissiner Dialekte* (An Abridged Grammar of the Sorb-Wendish Language after the Bautzen Dialect). Jakub Bart-Cisinki, another Upper Lusatian poet, is considered to be the greatest Sorbian poet, who published a collection of poems in Bautzen, in 1884.

4.8 Analysis and some early conclusions

It appears that the processes in the above survey contribute to the crystallisation of beliefs that language expresses the national character and its emotions. Of course in brief and in initial terms here, an opposing view of the above thesis, is that the impact of contemporary human movement undermines linguistic homogeneity or purity. In

⁶⁸ "Lusatian (Sorbian) Collections" in *The British Library Slavonic and Eastern European Collections*, (author not cited), p. 2.
 <<http://www.bl.uk/collections/easterneuroocean/lusatian.html>>.
 Sighted 20 March, 2003.

several instances this human movement is facilitated by a liberal acceptance of the notion of 'permeable boundaries' between nations and regions.⁶⁹ The European Union, with its notion of 'free movement of people' is one illustration of how this facilitates linguistic diversity, if not identity. Increasingly, people and communities are bilingual, multi-lingual and may for instance, have dual citizenship. Put another way, whilst communities or citizens may speak a language belonging to 'the other' (not the mother tongue), English exists not only as a dominant language, but also as a global one. In brief and simple terms, a mother language can be 'superseded' by economic and political pressures, which may advocate unity and homogenisation on the one hand, but at the same time allow for the existence of ethnic minorities. Is there a contradiction to the concept of a national character?

There seems however, to be plausible case in this instance concerning the German nation — or character. The first point that one needs to consider is, the different course of events that occurred in say France (the French Revolution), and Germany during the same epoch. In other words, there was a 'civic orientation underlying the development of French national identity in modern times', whereas German nation building relied on 'ethnically oriented modes of self-determination'.⁷⁰ Moreover, as Zuckermann argues, 'it seems that the values of *Volk* had a more profound impact

⁶⁹ See O'Neill, O., "Transnational justice: permeable boundaries and multiple identities" in *Socialism: The Common Good*, King, P., (ed.), (London: Frank Cass, 1996), pp.291-302. In particular, O'Neill investigates the concept that, today European boundaries 'are far more porous to the movement of people, money and goods. Yet... the external boundaries of the European Union remain relatively impermeable to many outsiders'. Ibid. pp. 294-295. O'Neill further argues that multiple national identities occur where 'many people simply see themselves as having a plurality of national identities'. Ibid. p. 298.

⁷⁰ Zuckermann, M., cited in Kohn, H., *Prelude to Nation-States: The French and German Experience, 1789-1815*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1967). p. 108.

upon the crystallization of German political culture than the normative institutions of (bourgeois) civil society'.⁷¹

Until the Enlightenment, or the first decades of the nineteenth century at least, there was a certain cosmopolitan element among German thinkers. This should be apparent in the above discussion of the Romantic period in Germany. However, the idea of cosmopolitanism was soon abandoned in favour of a 'basically irrational and chauvinistic notion, essentially reactionary, though perfectly anti-feudalistic and anti-absolutistic in its intents'.⁷² Zuckermann attempts to explain this by arguing that this corresponded to the 'real social conditions' in Germany at the time, 'where no self-aware bourgeois class with firm social-economic interests and corresponding political convictions had yet emerged'.⁷³ Remaining with Zuckermann's argument, this chauvinistic notion of the national movement established itself as the patriotically 'predominant ideology' in opposition to French imperial politics.⁷⁴ This also meant that at the same time, leading figures of the national movement were fighting against 'the land of bourgeois revolution, of modern civilization, and of capitalism'.⁷⁵ In other words, as Kohn argues, national differences were not explained by the

... materialistic history of the peoples but by elements belonging to the super-structure, like *poetry*, or — even more irrational — by the concept of "*Volkscharakter*" ("the personality of the people"), which, since Ludwig Friedrich Jahn, has been promoted to *Volkstum* — an even more obscure conception, that may be translated as '*national character*'.⁷⁶ (Emphases added).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid. pp. 108-109.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 109.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid. The above resonates with Müller's duality, in that Romanticism allowed for a nationalistic spirit, but at the same time advocated the virtues of cosmopolitanism.

In a sense the French and German experience between 1789 and 1815 serves as a historical paradigm of the two major competing manifestations of national development in Europe. Moreover, the above denotes a transformation of the 'universalistic Enlightenment ideals of the national, to the concept of a folk-oriented nation'.⁷⁷ This kind of ideation was further promoted by individuals such as Heinrich Luden who, since 1806 discounted the notion the community of Europe or of mankind, but instead, regarded the 'diversity and peculiarity of each nation, regarding the division into nations as a beneficial and eternal work of nature'.⁷⁸ Luden taught that all manifestations of culture and life belonged 'in each people with a unique character, which belongs only to this people'.⁷⁹ In brief, Luden subscribed to nationalism and the battle for domination, whereby 'only a state built upon the ethnic principle can be a true fatherland, that state and nation must coincide'.⁸⁰

The influence of Fichte was also evident in Luden's emphasis on folk, on *purity of language* and descent, in that 'the Germans were purer in race and more *original* in *their language* than other people, especially the French, and therefore superior to them'.⁸¹ (Emphasis added). Moreover, as Kohn points out in *Prelude to Nation-States*, more important was Luden's insistence that,

Political and ethnic frontiers must coincide, and that only a fatherland, which is united the whole nationality could provide a truly human life, culture, and happiness. Where folk and state were

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 110.

⁸¹ Ibid.

not identical, where a state included various nationalities or language groups, there, Luden was convinced, only misery, half-heartedness, and split personalities — *Halbheit, Zerrissenheit, Unlust und Jammer* — could exist.⁸²

The concept of *Volk* had a major implication in the development of the German concept of the 'national'. Although Prussia, Austria and Germany shared similar cultural values, the path to German unification in 1871 experienced a number of obstacles. For instance, Metternich 'was determined to resist nationalism, which would lead to the break-up of the Austrian Empire, and succeeded in doing so between 1815 and 1848.'⁸³ After the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, Bismarck founded the Northern German Confederation, which was dominated by Prussia. It was not until the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 that the German Empire was proclaimed in January 1871.

4.9 Background information

4.9.1 The creation of a divided Germany

The meeting of Allied wartime leaders, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill (sometimes referred to as the 'Big Three') in Yalta in September 1945— dictated the arrangements for the occupation of Germany. Germany would be temporarily divided into four occupation zones: the Soviets in the east, the British in the north-west, the Americans in the south-west, and the French in a small zone in the west carved out of the British and American zones. Berlin was also divided into four occupation zones, and would remain as the capital with authority vested in an Allied Control Council

⁸² Kohn, H., in *Prelude to Nation-States: The French and German Experience*, op. cit. p. 110.

⁸³ Townson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Modern History 1789-1945*, (London: The Penguin Group, 1994), p. 578.

consisting of the four commanders-in-chief. In brief, Germany would be demilitarised, denazified, and obliged to pay reparations.

At the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, relations between the 'Big Three' were seriously strained. Fear of Soviet ambitions on the one hand was evidenced by the Red Army's entry into Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest and Budapest. On the other hand, there were Stalin's suspicions that the 'imperialist powers' posed a threat to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the allied Declaration on Liberated Peoples of 1945 envisaged free elections in all parts of Europe freed by the allies, Soviet Union soon made it clear that it wanted governments installed that were favourable to her. In brief, it can be said that mutual suspicions of expansionism between the Americans and the Soviets escalated. Moreover, the issue of German reparations contributed to the tension between 'East and West', because the Soviets were anxious to strip their zone of capital equipment, while British and American taxpayers had less need of German reparations.⁸⁴

In 1946 the Level of Industry Agreement by the four powers had sought to prevent the emergence of a powerful German economy by for instance, limiting the level of steel production at seven million tons. However, Secretary of State James Byrne announced a change in policy in the summer of 1946 because 'it was not in the interests of the German people or... of world peace that Germany become a pawn or a partner in the military struggle for power between East and West'.⁸⁵ As it happened, once the Germans were given responsibility in their economic recovery, 'a serious

⁸⁴ The British and Americans argued that reparations should take place when the German economy had fully recovered, but the situation was further complicated when the French and Russians opposed the creation of a centralised economic administration unit.

⁸⁵ Cited by Carr, W., *A History of Germany*, (4th ed.), (London: Edward Arnold, 1990), p. 368.

revival of political life could not be delayed', as earlier in the summer of 1945 the Soviet Union had created four parties in her zones.⁸⁶ These were the Communists, or *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (KDP); the Socialists (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD); the Christian Democrats (*Christlich-Demokratische Union*, CDU); and the liberals (*Liberal-Demokratische Partei*, LPD). The end of 1945 fused the KPD and the SPD together. In April 1946 the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED) was founded, and then the SPD became banned in the Soviet zone. This fusion between the Communists and the Social Democrats in the Soviet zone was opposed by the Social Democrats in the three western zones where the SED was not recognised by the Allied authorities.

Elections for towns and parishes took place in September 1946 in all five *Länder* (states). The SED secured the largest number of votes; from 48.4 per cent in Saxony to 69 per cent in Mecklenburg; the Liberal Democrats were the second strongest party in Thuringia (25.7 per cent) and in Saxony (20.2 per cent), while the Christian Democrats were the second strongest party in Brandenburg (19 per cent) and 16 per cent in Mecklenburg. Further, on October 20 voting took place throughout the Soviet zone for the five *Landtage* (state councils) with a voter turnout of about 89 per cent. In brief, the SED won 47.5 per cent of the votes cast. The Liberal Democrats obtained 24.5 per cent and the Christian Democrats 24.4 per cent. Coalition governments were formed between the SED and the two other principal parties.

⁸⁶ Ibid. According to Carr, 'in allowing the 'bourgeois' parties to co-exist with the KPD Russia was acting in accordance with the Marxist belief that the whole of Eastern Europe had to undergo a 'bourgeois democratic' revolution before socialism was possible'. Moreover, the Soviet Union kept a tight rein on developments and key positions were filled by a group of exiled German Communists, led by Walter Ulbricht. Ibid.

Later on 6-7 December, in 1947, the SED convened a People's congress (*Volkskongress*) in East Berlin and another on March 17-18, 1948, which decided to set up a People's council (*Volksrat*). During this congress co-chairman Otto Grotewohl blamed the western powers for "refusing to solve the German problem on a four-power basis".⁸⁷ In the same year, the People's council began drafting a *constitution* for a German Democratic Republic. At the third congress on May 15-16, 1949, its members later elected to adopt the constitution on May 30. In brief, a new People's council was appointed, which was transformed into a provisional People's chamber (*Volkskammer*), and soon after a chamber of states (*Länderkammer*). On October 11, 1949, the two chambers elected Wilhelm Pieck as President of the republic (although the position was later abolished), and a new government was established under the premiership of Grotewohl, with Walter Ulbricht as first Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of the SED.

The CDU and the LDP were at first tolerated and enticed into coalition governments in all five *Länder*, but Soviet with support. The SED assumed control of all levels of government and eventually ousted all opposition. In brief, the zone became a communist regime and its administration became highly centralised, all matters of importance being controlled under Soviet supervision. The *Volkskammer* was, according to the constitution, to be elected by proportional representation, but in practice the single-list system ensured the communists their predominance. By 1952 revolutionary administrative reforms by the SED aimed at intensifying the socialist structure of the country.⁸⁸ Real political power lay with the Politburo of the SED. Further reforms saw the abolition of the five *Land* (provincial) governments and

⁸⁷ Cited in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 10 in 24 volumes, p.342.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p.349.

replaced them with 14 district councils (*Bezirke*), each comprising of 15-16 *Kreise* (counties). Each *Kreise* had about 50 *Gemeinden* (municipalities). The presidium of the council of ministers was responsible for the supervision of all ministries. Moreover, the reforms were also aimed at organising the country into units that would facilitate economic planning, and at tightening the control of the party over all local, regional and central government.⁸⁹ In 1960 the *Volkskammer* passed a law that saw the abolition of the presidency and replacing it by a council of state of 1 chairman, 6 deputies and 16 members, elected for 4 years, and a secretary.

In the early 1950s, the Soviet reparations demand was reduced. Moreover, a number of political developments took place, such as a treaty recognising the Oder-Neisse line as the permanent Polish-German frontier on July 6, 1950. The German Democratic Republic announced several measures during May 1952, which isolated it from the Federal Republic of Germany. This was done by a police guarded three mile wide no man's land along the whole extent of the frontier between East and West Germany, with Berlin being the only exception. Finally, on March 25, 1954, the Soviet government declared that the German Democratic Republic was sovereign.

Meanwhile, at a series of talks between the three western powers in the spring of 1948, enumerated the principles for the formation of a central but democratic government in West Germany. Interestingly, the ministers were authorised to convene a constituent assembly for the drafting of a federal type of constitution, which would provide a balance between a central authority and self-government for the participating *Länder* (states). At the same time, the constitution was to make possible

⁸⁹ Ibid.

the accession of the *Länder* of the Soviet zone. This draft of the constitution was to remain in force until such time that the constituent assembly of a united Germany could put in place a more permanent instrument. Hence, the German ministers insisted on calling the constitution the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), and adopted by a parliamentary council at Bonn on May 8, 1949.

Basic Law provided (and still provides) for a bi-cameral legislature — a *Bundestag*. The British, American and French military governors approved the above political system. Moreover, at this time the ten *Länder* made up the Federal Republic of Germany and the *Land* authorities administered not only *Land* (or state) laws, but also those of the federation. Under a federal system, each *Land* can legislate on any matter concerning its territory and its inhabitants which is not expressly allocated to the federation by the Basic Law, for instance, local government, education, cultural affairs and the police.

The detail and accounts of the Cold War have been well rehearsed elsewhere therefore this study shall by-pass what has now become a meta-narrative on this subject. It will converge toward a discussion of policy in terms of political, social, economic, cultural and language — a language of a Slav minority. An often-used metaphor that encapsulates the linguistic relationship between the Sorbs and its Germany majority, describes it ‘as an island in a sea of Germanic’.

4.10 Early difficulties in establishing Sorbian culture and language policy

As previously noted in Chapter Two the Lusatian National Committee in June 1945 expressed its wish that the Sorbs never wanted to be under German domination again.

However, it is also noted above that German Communists occupied administrative positions in all levels of government, which meant that the former KPD worked to prevent moves of a separate Sorbian section within the party.

The time from the formation of the German Democratic Republic in October 1949 to the Second Party Conference in July 1952 was important for the Sorbs in their struggle to obtain equal treatment for their language and culture. At the Second Party Conference the SED announced its programme for the socialist transformation of the GDR economy. This was to have a crucial effect on the policy towards the Sorbs. Under the 1948 Saxony Law and Article 11 of the first GDR constitution in 1949, it would seem that the Sorbs had made good progress. This constitution, using the terminology from the Weimar constitution — *fremdsprachige Volksteile* (non-German-speaking ethnic groups) did not make a direct reference to the Sorbs. However, it guaranteed the right to legal and administrative support for the promotion of their cultural needs.

Support for the Sorbs within the SED leadership was not unanimous. For instance, Ebert, the SED leader in Brandenburg rejected any idea of special treatment for Sorbian interests. But, as it happened Ebert eventually put forward legislation under extreme pressure from the central administration of the SED and the Soviet Military Administration. Other voices of disapproval were heard among SED leadership, such as that of Ernst Lohagen, head of the SED in Saxony, who in February 1950 accused

Sorbian leaders as being nationalistic and chauvinistic.⁹⁰ Furthermore, he maintained that the Sorbs would be assimilated in 50 years.⁹¹

Sorbian delegations, including the leadership of the Domowina that approached SED local officials between November 1947 and October 1951. In 1948 the SED leadership restructured itself according to the principles of 'democratic centralism'. The Domowina and other political and social organisations in the GDR were reorganised along the same lines. This in turn meant that in order for the implementation of a policy that allowed limited cultural autonomy, the Domowina needed to reorganise itself according to Marxist-Leninist principles. In brief, although the Domowina also had SED members, its executive committee was replaced by a secretariat, with Kurt Krjeńc as chairman of the Domowina in March 1951, after replacing Pawoł Nedo, who was suspected of having nationalist tendencies.⁹²

The new statute of the Domowina, which was passed at the Second Federal Congress of the SED in April 1952, structured the Domowina into an organisation along Marxist-Leninist lines, which could be used by the SED to reorganise the GDR's society and economy. As Barker points out,

The political function of the Domowina was to be an intermediary was to prepare the Sorbs for the drastic political and economic changes to come after the Second SED Party Conference in 1952 such as the collectivisation and industrialization of Lusatia.⁹³

⁹⁰ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op.cit., p. 52.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. p. 53.

⁹³ Ibid.

Although the Domowina had a trusted leader in Krjeńc, and most of its officials were SED members, the organisation was still distrusted by the SED and the Ministry for Security. Erich Mielke, who later became the Ministry's head, accused the Domowina in December 1951 of being 'nationalist and [exercising] Titoist subversion among the Sorbs'.⁹⁴ Sorb youth brigades had gone to Yugoslavia to help with reconstruction work in 1945-46, and Sorb organisations were suspected of having sympathies or links with Yugoslavia and its President Tito. Moreover, Mielke was particularly suspicious of the fact that the Sorbs had their own national anthem, *language* and publications, which in turn placed the Domowina under surveillance by the SED from the end of 1951 to 1953.⁹⁵ (Emphasis added). These suspicions by the SED culminated in an investigation by the Central Party Control Commission (ZPKK), responsible for party discipline, because of links between certain members of the Domowina and Czechoslovakia, particular the Slánsky group.⁹⁶ The Slánsky group had been put on trial in Czechoslovakia in November 1952, and accused of being Zionist national traitors. In brief, on the one hand while it seemed that measure were being put in place by the SED with the 'declared intentions of putting Sorbian language and culture on an equal basis with German', on the other hand inner circles of the SED treated all Sorbs, Communists or not as potential enemies.⁹⁷

Krjeńc was himself under close scrutiny and strongly criticised for his links with former SED members who had entertained the idea of creating a Lusatian region, *Bezirk*, after the abolition of the *Länder* in 1952.⁹⁸ Furthermore, the SED and the

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 54.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

secret police, Stasi, suspected 'Sorbian nationalists' of maintaining close links with 'reactionary' elements in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

4.11 Establishing a bilingual school system

In spite of the suspicions held by the SED hierarchy, it concerned itself with the establishment of a bilingual school system. As Barker notes, in January 1951 the Ministry of the Interior and the Education Ministry in Saxony implemented the regulations of the 1948 Law.⁹⁹ These regulations included the training of Sorbian officials, the use of the Sorbian language in administration and in the courts, and sign for public buildings and institutions written in Sorbian and German. Furthermore, Sorbs now had the right to use Sorbian versions of their names on official documents and could change their names if they had been germanised before 1945.¹⁰⁰

As the GDR was moving towards a more centralised administration, the policy of the SED towards the Sorbs was not clearly defined during the centralisation process. For instance, in 1951 central directives issued by the Ministry of Education failed to mention the teaching of Sorbian in the schools' curricula. Fred Oelßner, an influential representative of Sorbian interests to the Politbüro, voiced this after learning that the teaching of Sorbian in the schools needed to be improvised at the expense of lessons in Russian. As it happened, a central directive governing the organisation of schools in the Sorbian language area of Saxony and Brandenburg was finally introduced on 9 April 1952.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Sorbs also had the right to change their nationality to Sorbian in their personal documents, but at Barker notes, very few did so because the local police were obstructionist in facilitating this measure. Ibid. footnote number 13, p.59.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p.55.

Indeed, this marked an important step forward in the development of policy towards the Sorbs. Moreover, as Barker puts it, ‘for the first time regulations existed governing the development of the bilingual school system for the whole of Lusatia’.¹⁰² As a result, teaching in Sorbian was now compulsory for all Sorbian children, but this still depended on the area in which they lived. In other words, this policy was implemented in those areas where there was a Sorbian majority, and Sorbian was used as the everyday language of communication, inside and outside the family.

4.12 Bilingual Structures in the School System

Once again one needs to rely on the Barker’s work, which states the following,

A-schools were to be established in which all subjects were taught in Sorbian. German would only be introduced in the second year at the age of seven. In 1952 nine such schools were established in the districts of Kamenz and Bautzen, some of which had been already operating on this basis before 1952. In some Sorbian schools where there were a substantial number of German children, parallel German classes alongside the Sorbian A-class were created. In these areas Sorbian kindergartens were also established in which Sorbian was the main language of communication. In other areas of Lusatia where Sorbs were in a minority, or where Sorbian children no longer used Sorbian as their mother tongue, B-schools were established in which German was the language of instruction, but Sorbian was taught from the second year. In 1952 seventy-two such schools were created.¹⁰³

One of the major deficiencies noted here is that there was no regulation concerning German children. In other words, some ‘German children found themselves forced to

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 56.

take part in Sorbian classes'.¹⁰⁴ Although some of them did willingly, growing industrialisation in central parts of Lusatia, particularly in Hoyeswerda, meant that there was an influx of German workers who were opposed to their children being forced to learn 'Sorbian language and culture in order to overcome the legacy of the Nazi period.'¹⁰⁵

In any event, the 1952 directive firmly established the Sorbian language in Lusatia by formalising its status within the educational system. It can be said that the 1952 directive impacted on other aspects of Sorbian education. An account of this is found in the following.

The journal *Serbska šula*, which had previously been published by the Domowina, became the official journal for Sorbian teachers; a department for schools in the bilingual area was set up in the Central Pedagogical Institute (DPZI), after 1970 the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the GDR, which was responsible for overseeing the curriculum; a section 'Sorbian Textbooks' was established in the central publishing house for school textbooks, *Volk und Wissen* (People and Knowledge), to produce and publish Sorbian textbooks and teaching materials.¹⁰⁶

Moreover, the formalisation of the bilingual system included the standardisation of teacher training. A three-year training period was established for Sorbian teachers for the 'basic eight-year school (*Grundschule*), which brought it into line with standard GDR practice'.¹⁰⁷ In 1951 the first school students completed their course in Bautzen after taking their *Abitur* (school-leaving exam) and the first-degree courses in Sorbian

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 57.

for teacher training were commenced at the University of Leipzig. In Lower Lusatia, there was a shortage of teachers with 'linguistic competence in Lower Sorbian'.¹⁰⁸

4.13 Other developments

At this time, other institutional innovations were introduced, which ran parallel to the creation of a bilingual educational system. For instance, in 1951 at the University of Leipzig, the Sorbian Institute provided training not only for teachers, but also other professions, such as journalism and others that required bilingual speakers. Also in 1951, the Institute for Sorbian Ethnic research was founded in Bautzen, and it was incorporated into the GDR Academy of Sciences the following year. These two institutions were to provide the basis of the development of research into the Sorbian language, culture and literature and were supplemented by the forming of the Sorbian Peoples' Theatre and the Sorbian State Ensemble for Music and Dance. Thus, the above Sorbian organisations became the institutional basis for the development of Sorbian culture and education during the years 1951-52. But, as Barker notes, even though the above was a positive development, and in spite of it being the first time Sorbs were allowed access to the

... kind of structures enjoyed by the majority culture, German, ... it was happening within very clearly defined and restrictive political and ideological context which was ultimately to have negative consequences for the fight for survival against the processes of assimilation.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 57-58.

4.14 'The New Life in Lusatia will develop bilingually, in dual national form'.¹¹⁰

From the outset, Oelßner's statement requires further examination here, because as one shall soon see, Sorbian cultural autonomy came at a high political price. In brief, the institutionalisation of Sorbian culture meant that it became 'immediately subject to dictates of SED policy'.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the political pressures of the time in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, such as the Kraków show trial in Poland, purges within the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia and an uprising in the GDR, all of which happened in 1953. These events put greater pressure on Sorbian leaders to comply with the GDR Marxist-Leninist regime. The SED continued to accuse the leaders of the Domowina of putting Sorbian national interests above SED policy, and also accused it of chauvinistic, reactionary behaviour. These accusations were accompanied by surveillance by the secret police and suspicion in the 1950s went so far as an active operation in 1955-56 by the Ministry for State Security to investigate three leading Sorbs, Nowotny, the writer Jurij Brězan, and the former head of the Domowina, Nedo, had been involved in anti-state activities.¹¹² The investigation came to the conclusion that their activity was not treasonable and active surveillance was terminated in 1956.¹¹³

Oelßner, who, after an initial reluctance to take any interest in Sorbian matters, began to take them seriously from 1953-54. In 1955 for instance, he refuted Pieck's idea of the Sorbs as 'the remnants of a nation' by stating that they were 'a national minority

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 73. Part of Oelßner's address to the Third Federal Congress of the Domowina, 27-29 March 1955. The actual wording and thus the above translation was: Das neue Leben wird sich in der Lausitz zweisprachig entwickeln, in doppelter nationaler Form.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 61.

¹¹² Ibid. p. 62.

¹¹³ Ibid.

which has every possibility of becoming a socialist nation in the future'.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, it needs to be said here that Oelßner strove to improve the position of Sorbian language and culture, which could lead to the reversal of the assimilation process.

German officials working in the bilingual area were also encouraged to attend classes in Sorbian. This, it seems, gave Sorbian a higher status, if not equality with German. Moreover, in 1952 a law gave Sorbs the right to use their language in court proceedings and the right for its use in the administrative system. However, Oelßner's enthusiasm was not matched within the Central Committee of the SED. The party was more focused on the programme for collectivisation of agriculture and the industrialisation of Lusatia, particularly the development of it being a main energy source for the GDR from its lignite deposits.

Oelßner made it an imperative that the Domowina was to be 'strengthened ideologically and structurally', so that it could prepare the Sorbs for the 'substantial changes in their way of life'.¹¹⁵ As it happened, Oelßner's concept of a reversal of the assimilation process in Lusatia was being undermined by the social and economic policy of the GDR, which also mean the industrialisation of Lusatia. Barker cites some interesting figures on the impact of the influx of German workers. For instance, in a Sorbian area near Hoyeswerda,

...which in 1955 was a small town of 7,700 inhabitants, of whom just under 1,000 were Sorbs. By the end of the 1950s Hoyeswerda had a population of over 20,000, with the Sorbian population now

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 63.

a small minority, and it was intended that the town should grow to 70,000.¹¹⁶

The profound impact on the Sorbian population should be even further clearer and acute here. To be sure, a demographic study carried out by Ernst Tschernik in 1955-56 revealed that more than a third of the population outside the towns in Lusatia at this time was Sorbian-speaking, although Sorbian speakers, in total 80,346, accounted for only 13.8 per cent of the total population of the area surveyed — including the towns.¹¹⁷ Barker highlights the case of the huge energy complex Schwartze Pampa (Čorna Pampa), together with other energy projects, impacted on the population structure in the central region of Lusatia, so much, that by the 1980s only a tenth of the rural population was Sorbian-speaking.¹¹⁸ Once again, Meschkank's account has a strong resonance here. At the time of this research by the author (2002), Meschkank lamented over the fact that he knew of only two families in Cottbus, where the mother tongue, Sorbian, was learnt from childhood.

The Domowina was not informed or advised of such plans in advance. It learnt of the plans for such a complex through the SED newspaper *Neues Deutschland*.¹¹⁹ In brief, the Domowina 'was being made responsible for the effective execution of the nationalities policy, whilst not being given the necessary political power.'¹²⁰ But, to be fair, the evidence suggests a certain degree of apathy among the Sorbs. In order to

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 63-64. This phenomenon coincides with an account by Werner Meschkank; former director of the Wendisches Museum (Wendish Museum) in Cottbus, who commented in an interview (16 August 2002) by the author on the impact of small towns and villages, previously inhabited by Sorbians had disintegrated with the extension of brown coal mining in areas around Cottbus in Lower Lusatia.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 64.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

illustrate this point, the following discussion will give some insight into the above noted claims.

For instance, in an interview given to the Sorbian newspaper *Nowa doba*, on the occasion of the Sorbian Folk Festival in July 1956 in Bautzen, Oelßner tried to promote Schwartzze Pumpa, as a model for a bilingual socialist Lusatia.¹²¹ Oelßner stated that 'In the new industrial area, the German and Sorbian languages will be completely equal'.¹²² He did not think that industrialisation would inevitably lead to an accelerated assimilation or germanisation.¹²³ Instead, by 1958 the Domowina had calculated that there were over one thousand workers at the complex, but this figure represented only about five percent of the whole workforce.¹²⁴

The other aspect to consider here is that in 1957 the Domowina made strenuous efforts to set up Sorbian working groups in conjunction with the administration at the Schwartzze Pumpa complex for the development of Sorbian language activities. There was no enthusiasm for such a project and the following statement represented a typical attitude amongst the Sorbian workers at the plant

Up until now we were farmers and spoke Sorbian amongst ourselves, but now with the building of the factory here, it is necessary for our children to learn better German, since industrialization will in any case bring about the Germanization of our village.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 65.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

The influx of German workers had another side effect, and that was 'national pessimism' amongst the Sorbs, which was further compounded by 'the numerous reports of harassment of Sorbs when speaking their language in public, or of Sorbian women being laughed at by Germans for wearing their national costumes'.¹²⁶ Beno Šolta, the deputy editor of *Nowa doba* recounted in one of several letters to Oelßner, that many bilingual signs around Schwarze Pumpa had been removed and that a performance by a Sorbian folk group in Hoyeswerda had to be stopped because of disruptions by German workers.¹²⁷

According to Barker, there is no doubt that Oelßner

... a large amount of personal influence in attempting to increase the status of Sorbian language and culture, but no amount of positive discrimination could offset the effects of industrialization and socialist reconstruction on the Sorbian way of life.¹²⁸

However, it should be noted here that the above difficulties in executing the nationalities policy cannot be attributed to socialist reconstruction alone. Criticism of the current developments came from the Circle of Young Sorbian Writers, led by Jurij Brězan, who in October 1956 published an article which was critical of the SED policy, and of the Domowina, asserting that it (SED) 'was about to bring about the collapse of the unity of the Sorbian people'.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 67

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 66.

Further investigation reveals that in June 1956, the First Secretary of the Domowina, Bjarnat Nowak complained to the leader of the SED, Walter Ulbricht, about the administrative split between the two regions of Dresden and Cottbus. Nowak complained of the reluctance of the authorities in these regions to employ Sorbian functionaries and maintained that the unsatisfactory position of the Hauptabteilung für Sorbenfragen (Central Department for Sorbian Affairs — hereafter the HA), which led to the perception that there were two sets of authorities, one German and one Sorbian.¹³⁰ Nowak suggested the dissolution of the HA, and proposed one Lusatian region with local authorities taking full responsibility for the implementation of policy concerning the Sorbs. Furthermore, he demanded an early meeting with Ulbricht to discuss the introduction of a new Sorbian Law by the Volkskammer (People's Chamber).¹³¹

As Barker points out, the reason that such views were being expressed so openly was not only a reflection of the more liberal atmosphere in 1956 before the Hungarian uprising later that year, but also it was an expression of the 'frustration held by the Sorbian intelligentsia and officials at the effects of the SED's policy on the ethnic base of the Sorbs'.¹³² In brief, SED officials, especially at local level, had failed to take the measures seriously which should have been introduced under the nationalities policy.

By March 1957, it became apparent that Oelßner was facing a crisis in this policy. Sorb expectations of a bilingual Lusatia had not been realised. Moreover, Oelßner's

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid. pp. 66-67.

¹³² Ibid. p. 67.

response to the situation at the Fourth Federal Congress of the Domowina consisted of opposition to ‘manifestations of both Sorbian nationalism and German chauvinism’.¹³³ His strongest criticism was directed against Józef Nowak, a Catholic priest who had emphasised the notion of a ‘pure Sorbian family’, which argued that mixed marriages should be banned, a racist position that approached that of the Nazis.¹³⁴ But Oelßner persisted in maintaining the nationalities policy, believing that it would bring about an upsurge in Sorbian culture if the Sorbian people strove harder for their rights and if state bodies respected these rights by training bilingual officials and promoting the use of Sorbian in public.¹³⁵

In February 1958 Oelßner was removed from the Politbüro after opposing Ulbricht’s policy of the accelerated collectivisation of agriculture. His departure meant that the Sorbs had lost the last high-level representative of their interests, as his successor, Erwin Jurisch was a medium ranking official in the Abteilung Staats – und Rechtsfragen (ASR), the committee responsible for Sorbian matters. Moreover, the SED became aware of how unpopular Oelßner’s measures had been with the German population of Lusatia, especially amongst the newcomers to the area who complained about the bilingual educational system.¹³⁶ In addition, the SED further intensified its programme of socialist reconstruction, which meant that many SED functionaries regarded that any ‘special treatment of Sorbian interests was to receive a lower priority’.¹³⁷ Thus, the SED did not need much convincing to change its policy, so much that the head of the HA, Achim Handrik, was forced in February 1959 to ‘deny

¹³³ Ibid. p.67.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 68.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

the validity of the notion of a bilingual Lusatia, and by November the HA had totally dismissed Oelßner's concept of a bilingual Lusatia'.¹³⁸ Instead, the HA had declared,

The slogan, 'Lusatia is becoming bilingual' is wrong: it disorientates. The slogan must be: 'Lusatia is becoming socialist.' The nationalities policy is subordinate to the building of socialism.¹³⁹

4.15 Further developments of a bilingual Lusatia and the educational system

After the Third Federal Congress of the Domowina, both the Domowina and the HA put forward plans for a bilingual Lusatia, which appeared in a paper in May/June 1955. It recommended that the curricula and textbooks in all schools 'should reflect the special conditions existing in Lusatia and that German children should have at least a passive knowledge of Sorbian'.¹⁴⁰ One of the problems raised was the dissatisfaction with the way B-schools were functioning. They were too small, and the paper recommended that they be replaced by larger central schools, in which there could be parallel German and Sorbian classes. Furthermore, reform of the training system for Sorbian and German teachers was recommended so that 'all teachers had a basic knowledge of Sorbian'.¹⁴¹ Oelßner had earlier proposed a central training institute in Hoyeswerda, which would bring together teachers in Lower and Upper Lusatia.

These ideas were met with hostility by the SED and state bodies, particularly from the Ministry of Education during 1954 to 1958. Fritz Lange, the Minister for Education

¹³⁸ Ibid. p.69.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

noted in a letter to the Minister of the Interior, Karl Maron, that he had the impression that these proposals 'represent an attempt to create an autonomous region "Lusatia"'.¹⁴² In brief, Lange rejected the proposals of extending the teaching of the Sorbian language as well as Sorbian accusations of an increase in German chauvinistic behaviour towards the Sorbs in the 'wake of industrialization of the Hoyeswerda/Spremberg area'.¹⁴³

However, so far the process of industrialisation and its effects has not been fully explained. As noted above, one of the main forms of this industrialisation during the years of the GDR was opencast lignite mining, which destroyed the first Sorb village of Nowy Lubus (in German, Neulaubusch) in 1924.¹⁴⁴ According to this source, it claims that 'in the course of the 20th Century 117 villages and settlements were sacrificed to open-cast lignite mining'.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, 'two-thirds of them were predominantly Sorb-populated', and 'up to 1989 25,351 people were uprooted, resettled and, thus forcibly assimilated'.¹⁴⁶ Between 1945 and 1989 seventy-three Sorb villages and settlements were destroyed, thus forcing the villagers who were rural people with strong ties to the land, to be rehoused in apartment blocks in the towns of Hoyerswerda, Cottbus and Forst.¹⁴⁷ This in turn further increased assimilation in a majority German population, as internal migration increased the population of Lausitz with Germans from other parts of the GDR.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 70.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ See "Sorb Land-mining land", (author not cited),
<http://www.horno.de/english/mining_land/mining_land.htm>.
Sighted 9 May 2003.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Thus, in brief, it should be apparent by now that the Sorbs not only surrendered to the SED political structures 'in return for the creation of a number of cultural institutions, such as bilingual schools and a publishing house',¹⁴⁸ but also, the above account of rural destruction represented their submission to German authority. As Barker explains

The GDR's energy policy, which depended on open-cast [sic] mining in Lusatia, causing the destruction of a number of largely Sorbian villages, was also an important factor in accelerated assimilation.¹⁴⁹

4.16 Practical difficulties in the bilingual education system

Moreover, in 1956-57 there were signs of demands for a restriction in the bilingual school system when a report on the situation in the Kamenz district was produced in the Ministry of the Interior. Some of problems in the report noted that some 'Sorbian pupils in the A-schools were having in German, particularly in technical and science subjects'.¹⁵⁰ Also, there were problems noted by Hans-Joachim Laabs, the deputy Minister of Education, in the production of Sorbian textbooks in the publishing house Volk und Wissen (People and Knowledge).¹⁵¹ Laabs emphasised the high costs of Sorbian textbooks, and he cited the example of scientific textbooks, of which about fifty to eighty were needed each year for only two Sorbian Upper Schools, one Lower and one Upper Sorbian.¹⁵² In brief, the problems noted above seem to include day-to-

¹⁴⁸ Barker, P., "Images of Dominance and Submission in German-Sorbian Cultural Relations", in *Cultural Negotiations – Sichtweisen des Anderen*, Brown, C., and Fischer – Seidel (eds.), (Tübingen and Basel: A.Francke Verlag, 1998), p. 63.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op.cit p. 70.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 70-71.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 71. According to Laabs, the real cost of each copy was about 500 Deutsch Marks (DM), and he announced the suspension of the production of scientific textbooks in Sorbian for two years, because new textbooks in German were being prepared and there was no sense in translating old books into Sorbian. Ibid.

day administrative activity, but they also suggest a pedagogical difficulty in teaching science subjects in the Sorbian language.

In effect, 1958 saw a change in policy direction. The SED's functionaries who wanted to downsize the bilingual educational policy, used the decrease in the number of pupils taking Sorbian in both A- and B- schools. For instance, in 1954-55 over 9,000 pupils had been taking Sorbian in both A- and B-schools; by 1957-58 this figure had fallen to just under 8,000.¹⁵³ In the Cottbus region, as Barker notes, there was a fall of nearly 500 pupils taking Sorbian between 1956-57 and 1957-58.¹⁵⁴ Once again, one must keep in mind that the above-mentioned figures are in the context of an increased population in Lausitz as there was an increase in the number of industrial complexes, and that German was going to dominate as the language of the workplace.

At the same time however, under Article 39 of the 1968 Constitution of the GDR, it states

Citizens of the German Democratic Republic of Sorb nationality have the right to cultivate their mother tongue and culture. The exercise of this right is promoted by the state.¹⁵⁵

The above Article appears to be straightforward as is Article 19 (1), which states

Every citizen of the German Democratic Republic has the same rights, irrespective of his nationality, race, world outlook, social origin and position. All citizens are equal before the law.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. Barker also cites that this fall also reflected growing opposition of both German and Sorbian parents, to the teaching of Sorbian, and the often low quality of the teaching and teaching materials in the B-schools. Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ *The Constitution of the Socialist State of the German Nation*, (author/editor not cited), (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1968), p. 87.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 81.

Thus, on the basis of the GDR's energy policy, which contributed to the assimilation of the Sorbs, it appears that the GDR State *did not* promote the right of cultivating the mother tongue (Sorb) and culture by the destruction of the rural villages in Lausitz. Moreover, one may well question further, whether, the Sorbs were consulted or involved in the industrialisation process or policy.

Yet, Article 20 (1) of the GDR Constitution clearly states that

Every citizen of the German Democratic Republic has the right to *participate* fully in shaping the political, economic and cultural life of socialist society and the socialist state. The principle "Participate in working, planning and governing!" applies.¹⁵⁷ (Emphasis added).

Section (2) of Article 20 gives more detail about the rights of citizens. The focus here is on participation by the citizens, and resonates with what one might expect in a pluralistic arrangement of society. But it would appear that the industrialisation process discussed above was achieved by coercive means rather than in a spirit of cooperation. Thus, it would be an erroneous representation to say as one commentator puts it, 'The Sorbs were pampered under the DDR'.¹⁵⁸ Instead, the evidence seems to suggest repressive measures against the Sorbs who refused to accept the SED's nationalities policy.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ "The Sorbs were pampered under the DDR" was a comment made at the beginning of the author's field research in Berlin, on 31 July 2002. Interestingly and spontaneously, a former history teacher whose wife was of Sorb heritage made this comment during a casual discussion.

4.17 Sorb repression

Between 1949 and 1953, and from 1958 to 1960, a number of Sorbs had been imprisoned, or had been repressed because the Stasi regarded them, as enemies of socialism in the GDR.¹⁵⁹ For instance, Hinc Šolta, an editor at *Nowa doba* (New Day), was accused of ‘having strong links with Polish and Hungarian reformers, and of having a negative attitude towards the nationalities policy, which he regarded as only serving to further the interests of the SED’.¹⁶⁰ He was also suspected of using his position within the newspaper to ‘produce a series of ambiguous reports’.¹⁶¹

However, as Barker explains, Šolta’s persecution was not so much based on his being a Sorb, but rather, his ‘generally negative attitude towards political developments in the GDR’.¹⁶² Remaining with Barker’s study, the case of Paweł Nali ‘was however clearly one in which the Sorbian element was the most crucial’.¹⁶³ Nali, who had studied in Yugoslavia from 1948 to 1950, had been regarded with suspicion by the SED because he had advocated for a separate Sorbian state, and publicly criticised the destruction of small Sorbian farms, as well as the creation of the energy complex at Schwarze Pumpe.¹⁶⁴ In April 1961 he was sentenced to three- and- a- half years imprisonment.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op. cit p. 72.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 73. Interestingly, in GDR times, Bautzen’s name stood for the notorious prison of the Stasi, in which many political prisoners were held between 1956 and 1989. ‘Bautzen II’ was unofficially placed under the Ministry of State Security, and populated by opponents of the regime like Erich Loest, Walter Janka and Rudolf Bahro. The Nazis between 1939 and 1945 used Bautzen I, the prison on the northern outskirts of the town for its political opponents, including Ernst Thälmann, the leader of the German Communist Party. For five years after 1945, it was used as a special camp by the Soviet authorities for former Nazis and opponents of the Stalinist regime. Some 2,700 prisoners died there and were disposed of on “Rabbit Hill”, which is now the site of a memorial chapel for the victims.

Source: Dagmar Giersberg, Goethe Institut Inter Nationes,
<<http://www.goethe.de/kug/ges/sur/thm/en36547.htm>>.

Although the above illustrations of Sorbian repression are limited to two individuals, in a broader context it can be said that the attitudes of the local population 'often evinced a degree of racism rooted in a quite traditional ethnic conception of the nation'.¹⁶⁶ Thus it is argued here, that in spite of the Marxist ideological tenet of 'international socialism', there-remained a 'chauvinistic tension' between the local German population and a Slavonic ethnic group, the Sorbs.

In any event, it should be noted that despite any public opposition to the SED's policy, which in turn had severe consequences for individual Sorbs, the mid-1950s witnessed extensions to the network of Sorbian institutions. In brief, one cannot explicitly assess this period as one that contained a policy towards germanisation. The following section will examine the GDR's language policy up to 1971.

4.18 Changes in the SED's Language Policy: A Policy of Contradictions?

From about 1957, strong criticism was aimed at the Domowina 'for not carrying out its political role of transmitting SED policy to the Sorbs and for putting too much emphasis on culture and language'.¹⁶⁷ The dismissal of Oelßner in 1958 not only meant that the Sorbs had lost a key supporter of Sorbian affairs in the Politbüro, but also his replacement with Klaus Sorgenicht, and a succession of others in the Central Committee led to a weakening of the Sorbian lobby in Berlin.¹⁶⁸ By the summer of 1958, a change in policy was evident. In brief, the HA demanded a 'greater emphasis

Sighted 16 May 2003.

¹⁶⁶ Fulbrook, M., *German National Identity after the Holocaust*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999), p. 196.

¹⁶⁷ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op.cit. p. 77.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 78.

on the socialist development in Lusatia and the parallel downgrading of Sorbian ethnic questions'.¹⁶⁹ Thus, some Sorbian functionaries became discouraged.

However, other institutions including the Domowina and the Institute for Sorbian Ethnic Research continued to believe that it was possible to combine socialist and national policies.¹⁷⁰ But this created a split between the Sorbian organizations, especially when the Domowina accused the HA that it had betrayed the Sorbian national interest.¹⁷¹

At this point, it may be useful to briefly examine another perspective. The following commentary does not converge with that presented by Barker in the above. For instance, Schuster-Šwec portrays the GDR's nationalities policy rather differently. It is warranted here to cite Schuster-Šwec's assertion in detail here, which states that

Only in the GDR was the Sorbian language able to develop freely due to the consistent application of the Marxist-Leninist nationality policy and to take up its function as an equal second vehicle of communication and next to the German language also spoken by all Sorbs.¹⁷²

Schuster-Šwec further maintains that, 'Today the Sorbian language is promoted in the G.D.R. and developed further taking into account the specific bilingual and socio-linguistic conditions'. Thus it should be apparent here that Schuster-Šwec's argument is misleading. Kasper's compilation does not provide any biographical notes about the co-authors in his work. In any event, it may be the case that Schuster-Šwec is writing

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 78-79.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 79.

¹⁷² Schuster-Šwec, H., "On the Language Situation of the Lusatian Sorbs in the G.D.R." in *Language and Culture of the Lusatian Sorbs throughout their History*, Kasper, M., (ed.) (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987), p. 41.

from either a hardened and myopic ideological perspective (Marxist-Leninist), or that he is simply writing under coercive conditions that existed in the GDR. Certainly, this is speculative, but either way, his claims seem to be unsubstantiated when compared to the scholarship that is evident in Barker's investigation.

Moreover, at the beginning of the 1960s when polytechnical education was extended in schools, it was argued that the role of Sorbian in the 'A schools', should be reduced.¹⁷³ In 1962 when changes in the GDR's policy were evident, this meant that those schools in which Sorbian was the language of instruction for all subjects except German, was forced to give way to German as the language of instruction in the science subjects.¹⁷⁴ Ministerial bureaucrats spoke of problems pupils might experience in work training and later in the workplace itself. But, in essence this meant that 'Sorbian could never be the language of production and science'.¹⁷⁵ As Barker puts it as 'a logical result of the denial to Sorbian of any status at work: even in agriculture, where no exclusively Sorbian cooperatives were formed.'¹⁷⁶

In 1962, the 'Siebte Durchführungsbestimmung' ("seventh regulation implementation", hereafter referred to as the 7DB) brought about a drastic fall in the number of pupils learning Sorbian as a second language in the 'B schools'. This campaign, which has already been alluded to in the above, had started in the mid-1950s when school officials put pressure on German and Sorbian pupils to take part in Sorbian classes. A number of parents objected to this and withdrew their children

¹⁷³ Barker, P., "From Wendish-Speaking Germans to Sorbian-Speaking Citizens of the GDR: Contradictions in the Language Policy of the SED", in *Finding a Voice: Problems of Language in the GDR*, Jackman G., and Roe, I., (eds.), (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 39-54. The above is an extract, which was sent by the author <p.j.barker@rdg.ac.uk> as an email attachment to <tcichon@postoffice.utas.edu.au> on 21 May 2003.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

from Sorbian classes. In brief, this illustrated the rejection of the notion of a bilingual Lusatia, especially when a new regulation came into force in September 1964, making participation in Sorbian classes in the 'B schools' voluntary. The Domowina was not allowed to attempt to influence parents in their decision. As a result of this regulation there was a drastic fall in the numbers taking Sorbian classes from 12,800 in 1962, to 2,700 in 1967.¹⁷⁷ (A comparison of the school figures between 1959 and 1969, is provided in the Appendices).

Walter Lorenz, who was in the Ministry of Education, was responsible for the above measure, regarded the Sorbs who opposed the new measure as 'nationalists'. Not only did Sorb officials who opposed this new measure denounce Lorenz, but also, he was criticised by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Richard Wenzel, because it gave the impression that the measure was a further step in the forced assimilation of the Sorbian people.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Lorenz had support for this policy from the Central Committee, and in 1968 the 'Siebte Durchführungsbestimmung' (7DB) was replaced by the 'Vierte Durchführungsbestimmung zum Bildungsgesetz' (which means "the fourth regulation implementation of the education law", hereafter the 4 DB). In brief, the new law made a marginal concession. That is, the Domowina was now allowed to advise parents when making the decision, and it required that the school arrange a consultation with the parents.

However, despite the Secretariat of the Central Committee claiming that the majority of parents were in favour of the 1964 7DB decree, a number of the Sorbian

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 13.

¹⁷⁸ Barker, P., "From Wendish-Speaking Germans to Sorbian-Speaking Citizens of the GDR: Contradictions in the Language Policy of the SED", *op.cit.* p. 13.

intelligentsia opposed several elements of the new law. In particular, writer Jurij Brězan allegedly called the new law 'the Lorenz law for the liquidation of the Sorbs', and said to have written a poem entitled 'Kak wótčinu zhubich' (How I lost my fatherland), a 'retraction of his earlier poem from 1950, 'Kak wótčinu namakach' (How I discovered my Fatherland)'.¹⁷⁹

As it happened, the number of pupils began 'to rise again in the 1970s, and 1980s, and by 1989 had reached 6,000, which was partly a result of a more relaxed policy on the part of the SED'.¹⁸⁰ The falls in the number of pupils taking Sorbian noted earlier were not uniform across the bilingual area. As Barker notes,

The steepest drops of 80 per cent were in the two districts, Bautzen and Cottbus-Land, where previously almost all pupils had participated in Sorbian classes in Sorbian B – schools, while the lowest fall of 20 per cent was in Weißwasser, where the principle of voluntary participation had been applied before 1964, and where school authorities had allowed parents to be advised about the new regulations.¹⁸¹

In order to gain a further understanding of the implications of the 7DB, it may be useful to examine some of the practical or organisational issues that arose. For instance, teachers had to deal with small groups in Sorbian classes, which often had to be scheduled outside the normal school day in the late afternoon.¹⁸² This in turn affected pupils living in rural areas, who were dependent on organised school

¹⁷⁹ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op.cit. p. 89. Other leading Sorbian critics were Jan Šolta and Měrcin Kasper from the Institute for Sorbian Ethnic Research, and Jurij Pěčka, director of the Extended High School in Cottbus. Ibid. p. 89.

¹⁸⁰ Barker, P., "From Wendish-Speaking Germans to Sorbian-Speaking Citizens of the GDR: Contradictions in the Language Policy of the SED", op.cit. p. 13.

¹⁸¹ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op.cit. p. 87.

¹⁸² Ibid. p. 89.

transport, and this resulted in poor attendance.¹⁸³ Moreover, a reduction in lessons from thirty-five to twenty-one a week 'led to a loss in *prestige* for Sorbian teaching in that it was quite clearly seen to have been pushed to the periphery of the school curriculum'.¹⁸⁴ (Emphasis added).

4.19 The status of the Sorbian language

The claim made in the above statement put differently meant that it negatively affected the *status* of Sorbian as a language. For it is the status of language that will significantly determine its chances of survival, especially among minority groups. This brings one back to the theoretical perspectives of language education as one aspect, but one that is an important part of socialisation. In other words, humans acquire knowledge of and competence in a specific language through the complex process of socialisation. Therefore it can be argued here, that by extrapolating this theoretical aspect of socialisation discussed in Chapter One, the person sending the message (transmitter), or in this case teaching the language (Sorbian) does not believe that the language has status, then there is little potential that the decoder (the recipient) will learn, or at least be responsive to the cultural values of learning that language. In brief the state apparatus in this instance undermines the position, or status of both the encoder and the decoder. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the theoretical explanations that are presented in the available discourse *assume* that the socialisation process, particularly that of language and/or culture takes place under 'normal' conditions. In other words, the socialisation process takes place in an environment where cultural and linguistic chauvinism, assimilation, discrimination and oppression do not exist. The conditions under which the younger Sorbian

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 89-90.

population experienced as discussed in the above, would certainly contribute to a deleterious effect in regards to *linguistic competence*. Thus, it may come as no surprise that in the context of language status when Meschkank points out that during his formal education during the time of the DDR, Sorbian students who studied in Czechoslovakia or Poland, felt “more at home” in a Slavonic environment, than those Berlin for instance, or at other German institutions.¹⁸⁵

However, for the purposes of this study, it is interesting to note that according to Barker’s investigation, the 7DB ‘did have one significant positive aspect, in that it confirmed the status of the A-schools’.¹⁸⁶ In brief, one can summarise this by using Barker’s assessment that

The overall effect of the 7 DB on the morale of those Sorbs who believed strongly in the importance of their language being seen as having *equal status* with German was negative. The Sorbian institutions, such as the Domowina, had been forced to accept the new regulations, and this submission had further undermined its status in the eyes of many Sorbs, especially the Catholic Sorbs, who held the Domowina responsible for changes of 1962 and 1964.¹⁸⁷ (Emphases added).

4.20 Division within the Sorb groups at the end of the 1960s.

As this decade progressed, one can identify the main protagonists in the issues and discontent of the nationalities policy in Lusatia. There are three institutional bodies that are in conflict here: the Domowina, the Catholic Church and the SED, or state. Of course, one must also consider the Sorbian population, because they were the living subjects of assimilation. In brief, this refers to the living conditions of the subjects,

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Werner Meschkank, curator of the Wendish Museum, Cottbus, 16 August 2002. See Appendices for full text of this informal interview.

¹⁸⁶ Barker, P. *Slavs in Germany*, op. cit p. 90.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 90.

which not only applies to the literal translation of 'housing', but also includes a society's wellbeing, materially and psychologically. Thus, this a good opportunity to remind one of the concept of a 'collective psyche', which can be shaped by the decline of its language, the absence of free expression, which also includes the freedom to express one's nationality and culture, to name but few. It is safe to say here, that the theoretical and empirical approaches used in this study mirror each other. Moreover, it allows one to propose that the psychological health of individuals eventually becomes the psychological health of a group (the Sorbs), which is expressed collectively. It is as if the above are also the criteria for 'diagnosis', or at the very least make an assessment of the 'political health' of a regime.¹⁸⁸ Thus, for present purposes it can be said that freedom, as opposed to repression, can be regarded as a euphemism for a healthy civil society. At the other extreme, the Cold War, in a sense was a manifestation of psychological warfare.

To continue with examination of the abovementioned institutions and their divisions, the Domowina was seen as an organization selling out to the SED.¹⁸⁹ The Catholic Church had been in confrontation with the state over the question whether schools in the Catholic area

... were allowed to keep crucifixes on the walls of their classrooms, and over the 'Jugendweihe' (socialist confirmation

¹⁸⁸ During a visit to Poland in 1983 martial law was imposed by the communist leader General Jaruzelski for instance, the author observed a certain manifestation of 'psychomotor retardation' among the populace. The details of this period in Poland and its consequences are well rehearsed elsewhere, but it is sufficient to say that by using the clinical analogy, which means a slowness of human movement associated with severe depression (as well as side effects), was apparent in the collective context among the Poles, who lived, in a climate of food shortages, long queues, *Solidarność* outlawed, secret police and the coercive involvement of the military. These were just some of the contributing factors to daily life that was outwardly expressed as a collective depression. In brief, there was no motivation for people to strive for fulfilment of the common good. The abuse of alcohol adds to the clinical picture of the nation, (as well as within the Soviet Union). This overview of the collective psyche parallels the notion of Sorbian 'national pessimism' noted below.

¹⁸⁹ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op. cit., p.92.

ceremony), which had low participation rates, especially in Catholic Sorbian schools — led to a distancing between the Domowina and significant sections of the Sorbian population.¹⁹⁰

In other words, the state employed a mechanism that would mean the usurpation of church rites and ceremonies. There were government rituals for such occasions as baptism, marriage and death. Thus the ritual of *Jugendweihe*, akin to the ceremony of church confirmation meant that young people between the ages of twelve and sixteen years would dedicate themselves to socialism rather than to Christianity.

The SED had used the Domowina as an instrument to persuade the Sorbs to adapt to collectivisation of agriculture and industrialisation, as well accept the reasoning for the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961.¹⁹¹ This resulted in a decline in membership of the Domowina groups from 12,094 in 1962 to 10,528 in 1965, ‘the most significant fall occurring after the introduction of the 7 DB’.¹⁹² In brief, the process of assimilation was accelerated by not only the factors already noted above, but also by the ageing of the Domowina’s membership.¹⁹³ The SED’s main objective was for the Sorbs to accept their obligation in the socialist development of the GDR, rather than it (the SED) genuinely foster the constitutional ideal of Article 40.

Moreover, it has already been mentioned that the subject of accurate statistical data on the Sorbs has been elusive. This is further demonstrated when in 1967, the Sorbian Ethnic Research made an application to carry out a survey of the ethnic composition of Lusatia. Jurisch, of the ASR argued against such a survey, as it would only

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p.92.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

highlight the advanced state of the assimilation process, and this could lead to an increase of 'national pessimism' and 'Sorb nationalism'.¹⁹⁴ But the Domowina was aware of the acceleration of the assimilation process, and at the same time the SED was worried about the effect of the 'Prague Spring' in 1968 on the Sorbian intelligentsia.¹⁹⁵

Thus, the eruptions of dissent in Berlin and Poznań in Poland in 1953, the Hungarian uprising in 1956, as well as the Czechoslovakian experience in 1968, were added tensions and antagonisms in those countries. Interestingly, Holt's 1958 publication of *Radio Free Europe* (RFE) does not mention appeals made to the Sorbian issues in its transmissions.¹⁹⁶ RDR had twenty-nine transmitters by 1955, but it did not broadcast to East Germany (or the Soviet Union).¹⁹⁷ In any event it is safe to say that, RFE set out 'to break the monopoly on information that the satellite regimes feel it is so essential to their success'.¹⁹⁸ Poland and Czechoslovakia as two neighbouring Slavonic nations had close influences on Sorbian consciousness. Among other broadcasting services of RFE, it set out to demonstrate the ethics and institutions of democracy and provided anti-communist polemics to five Eastern bloc countries, which also included Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. The above may be overlooked as a diversion from the theme of this discussion, but it serves as an illustration as to why the SED would be anxious about Sorbian developments. It should be noted that these events, developments, programmes/policies and so on, were shrouded by the political and ideological conflict of the Cold War, between East and West.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 92.

¹⁹⁶ See Holt, R.T., *Radio Free Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 16.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 17.

Yet in an interview given by Krjeńc to a Polish journalist in 1970, Krjeńc said, 'The Domowina ... indeed supported the process of industrialization and will continue to do so, despite the fact that it is clearly endangering the ethnic base of the Sorbs'.¹⁹⁹ By the same token, using Barker's assessment,

...with the formalization of the nationalities policy in 1968 through the article in the constitution and the stabilization of the situation in the B-schools with the 4DB, there was less pressure on the Domowina from the SED to pursue political goals, and it was allowed to put more emphasis on questions of language.²⁰⁰

Thus, according to Barker's analysis, one is led to observe the parodies of politics that occurred with the main groups: the Domowina, the SED (or the state), and the Churches. On the subject of the Church, it is interesting to note how the 1949 constitution had detailed the regulations concerning the relationship between Church and State. But in the 1968 constitution, Article 20 severely limited the power of the Church. While on the one hand the Article declared that every citizen had the to profess and practice a religion, on the other hand, it demanded that the Church organise its activities in conformity with GDR legal regulations.

Moreover, the Evangelical Church of Germany had withstood for a number of years, 'numerous attempts to split and end its existence as the one remaining all-German organisation and bridge between East and West'.²⁰¹ However, in 1968, an

¹⁹⁹ Cited by Parker, P. *Slavs in Germany*, op.cit p. 93.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Staar, R.F., *The Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, (Stanford: Hoover Institutions Publications, 1971), p. 103.

announcement was made of proposed amalgamation of the churches in East Germany, thus formalising the “Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR” in September 1969.

At the Seventh Federal Congress in February 1969, the position of the Domowina was clearer in that it was called a ‘socialist national organisation’, and awarded the ‘Banner der Arbeit’ for its ‘contribution to the development of socialism in the GDR’.²⁰² There is a sense that the SED had put into place its policies of socialist development. In other words, it implemented the collectivisation of agriculture, industrialisation (lignite mining and consequent destruction of Sorb villages), followed by the relocation to city blocks, which also added to the process of assimilation. Another important point is the subservient role of the Domowina within the GDR, which can be argued, was achieved by political blackmail. In brief, the SED got what it wanted and fortunately Lausitz did not experience the confrontation by tanks.

Interestingly, as it happened, Barker notes that the Domowina was now allowed to place the emphasis on *questions of language*, with more time being spend on organising *cultural and language activities*.²⁰³ (Emphases added). On the one hand, this has to be seen as an improvement in conditions for the Domowina. On the other hand, it can be argued that no matter what measures were implemented as part of nationalities polices, logically the German state would remain dominant over any ethnic minority within its boundaries. Perhaps, intrinsically there would always be a ‘master and servant’ relationship between the two nationalities, which seems to

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

contain an element of 'appeasement' among the Sorb population. This phenomenon has continued, up to the time of writing, particularly in Cottbus/Lower Lusatia. In brief, the elder Sorbs voice their support for the development and maintenance of Sorbian culture and language in the context of a unified Germany. However, they are passive when Sorbian officials struggle with the state's bureaucratic apparatus and its policies.²⁰⁴ But the latter point belongs to a more detailed study in the following chapter.

4.21 1971-1989

Walter Ulbricht had been the longest surviving Communist Party leader in Eastern Europe. He became the SED's secretary-general in 1950. Erich Honecker succeeded Ulbricht in May 1971, as first secretary of the SED. In brief, after the Seventh Congress, the new appointments to the Politbüro, the Secretariat and the accompanying changes in the Central Committee strengthened the representation of party officials at the expense of economists and technocrats.²⁰⁵

Before continuing with the analysis of language and nationalities policies during the period of 1971-1989, it may be useful to give a brief outline of the economic condition of the GDR. The monetary unit, "Mark of the German Bank of Issue" (MDN or Ostmark) had an official exchange rate of 2.22 to one US dollar. There were seven universities for 78,308 students.²⁰⁶ The *Britannica Yearbook 1972* provides an array of figures for education, finance, foreign trade, transport, communications,

²⁰⁴ During an interview on 16 August 2002, with Werner Meschkank at the Wendish Museum in Cottbus, Meschkank stated that the older Sorbs would pledge their support in matters concerning the administration of Sorbian affairs (within the now unified Germany), but later succumb to what he referred to as 'keeping the peace' by allowing the German government to appoint its own executive officers to Sorb institutions.

²⁰⁵ Schattmann, S.E., "German Democratic Republic", in *Britannica Book of the Year 1972*, (Chicago: William Benton Publisher, 1972), (events of 1971), p. 331.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

agriculture and industry. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to give a detailed analysis of the above economic markers, notwithstanding inflated figures, but some exposure of the available data for present purposes is warranted. For instance, in 1965 the deutschemark /ostmark, or DM (O), also exchanged at a rate of 2.22 to one US dollar.²⁰⁷ The net national income in 1962 was 77.6 billion-DM (O), and in 1963 it increased to 79.7 billion DM (O), compared to 102.6 billion MDN (O) in 1967, and 108.1 billion MDN (O) in 1968.²⁰⁸ Interestingly, in 1962-63, there were 114,002 students at the seven universities and higher institutions, almost 35,700 more than in 1968-69.²⁰⁹ For the record, lignite production (in 000; metric tons) was 254,219 in 1964,²¹⁰ and 260,600 in 1969.²¹¹

Certainly, one must be cautious when interpreting statistical data such as the above, not to mention the likelihood of distorted figures, in order to fuel the East-West propaganda war. But, the intention here is to get an overview, or a profile as to how the East German state was performing.

In any event, Staar maintains that,

The economy has been oriented toward heavy industry at the expense of consumers' goods. Farm policies in East Germany have been just as disastrous as elsewhere in the bloc. Official food rationing was abolished in 1958, but each consumer was required to purchase his basic food supplies at a particular store. This requirement in effect continued rationing, which has been

²⁰⁷ Schattmann, S.E., "German Democratic Republic", in *Britannica Book of the Year 1966*, (events of 1965), (Chicago: William Benton Publisher, 1966), p. 347.

²⁰⁸ Schattmann, S.E., "German Democratic Republic", in *Britannica Book of the Year 1972*, op.cit. p. 331.

²⁰⁹ Schattmann, S.E., "German Democratic Republic", in *Britannica Book of the Year 1966*, op.cit. p. 347.

²¹⁰ *Britannica Book of the Year 1966*, op. cit. p.347.

²¹¹ *Britannica Book of the Year 1972*, op.cit. p. 331.

abandoned or reinstituted during the 1960's in accordance with the availability of supplies.²¹²

Furthermore, collectivisation came rather slowly to East Germany, with only about a half of all farms collectivised by the end of 1959.²¹³ But, between February and April of 1960, the programme was pushed to almost completion in a manner resembling that of the Soviet Union in the 1930s.²¹⁴ The results were similar, which meant immediate decreases in grain production, with shortages of meat and livestock. As Staar notes,

The only remedial actions taken by the German Democratic Republic have been to increase political controls on farming and press communist youth groups into emergency during the busiest times of the year.²¹⁵

Thus it is safe to say, that the Sorb like his/her East German counterparts, did not experience the comfort and prosperity that was expected of the utopian socialist ideal. Put another way, it is not only economic factors that may determine whether an individual will reach his/her fullest potential, but also the opportunity and availability of education outside the dominant cultural and political paradigm. This survey will now examine the GDR's language and nationalities policies during the Honecker years.

²¹² Staar, R.E., *The Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, op.cit. p. 103.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 103-104.

4.22 Early 'thawing of the ice' between East and West

The change in leadership of the SED in 1971 occurred during the Chancellorship of Willy Brandt in West Germany (the Federal Republic or FRG). What is significant about this period is that, treaties with Poland and the Soviet Union marked Brandt's *Ostpolitik* in 1972, which accepted the Oder-Neisse line, and indirectly acknowledged the *de facto* authority of the GDR. Moreover, it can be said that the GDR was perceived as the second German State, and the GDR took on a legal international personality. The GDR achieved *de jure* recognition in the aspect of foreign relations. A number of western states, including Britain and the United States, gave diplomatic recognition of the GDR. Between late 1969 and early 1970, other countries that recognized the GDR included the United Arab Republic, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, the People's Republic of South Yemen, Cambodia, Congo, the Central African Republic, Algeria, Ceylon and India.²¹⁶ The point here is, to introduce the idea of a changing East German state in the context of the international community. Its discussion will receive greater attention in the next chapter.

4.23 Problems, Developments, and Glasnost

4.23.1 The problem of policy contradictions 'in the bilingual schools

In order to resume the central analysis of this chapter, one is in a sense compelled to return to the scholarship of Barker. To begin with, he claims that 'the contradictions inherent in the nationalities policy had not however gone away and were to undermine its effectiveness until the end of the GDR'.²¹⁷ In brief, it was a continuation of the division among the Sorb groups discussed above, particularly the relationship

²¹⁶ *Christ und Welt*, April 24, 1979; Radio East Berlin, May 20, 2 July, and 2 August, 1970. Cited in Staar, R.E., *The Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, op. cit. p. 108.

²¹⁷ Barker, P., *Slavs in Germany*, op.cit. pp. 99-100.

between the Domowina, the state and its policies. On the one hand it seemed that the SED had the 'Domowina firmly under its control'.²¹⁸ On the other hand, the ASR claimed that there was overwhelming acceptance that 'Sorb interests were seen as being identical with those of a socialist GDR'.²¹⁹

Moreover, contradictions were visible in the bilingual education system. Grievances such as 'insufficient provision of Sorbian in the kindergartens, inadequate teaching materials and poor results in the high schools', were in turn perceived by the Central Committee as the Domowina attempting to teach Sorbian outside the overall aims of the educational system, and that the issues raised by the Domowina were 'groundless, exaggerated and one-sided'.²²⁰ However, the Ministry of Education did respond to the criticisms from the Domowina. Although the Ministry defended its position on matters such as textbook production and teaching materials, at the same time the Ministry's response was one of criticism of the Domowina's 'obsession with participation rates, which in its view diverted away from raising the quality of the teaching'.²²¹ Also, under the 4 DB requirement parents had to commit their children to participation in Sorbian classes up to class 10, whereas the 7 DB regulation required that it had only been up to class 8. Thus, the Ministry again felt that the Domowina was placing too much emphasis on the question of language, especially in the B – schools area 'in order to boost recruitment to Sorbian classes in the B-schools'.²²² Moreover, the Domowina argued that two or three lessons a week could not reverse a situation in which Sorbian was the normal language of communication,

²¹⁸ Ibid. p. 99.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 100.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

and as a minority language it was 'treated as a foreign language', one that could not reverse the assimilation process, and this recognition 'was at the heart of the Domowina's frustration with the system'.²²³ Perhaps one of the key irritants for the Domowina was that because it believed that the structures for bilingual education were in place, the system would allow for Sorbian education to proceed unhindered.

4.23.2 Social actors and the GDR State: Clubs, Domowina and the Church

A meeting was held in December 1971, in Berlin, between the ASR, senior functionaries of the Domowina, and the local SED functionaries from Dresden, Cottbus and Bautzen to discuss a range of problems. It was felt by the Domowina that the bilingual education system was a veneer for the accelerated assimilation process. The Domowina's concern about accelerated assimilation remained the same throughout the 1970s and 1980s, just as they did in the 1960s, as well as 'the inability of the present structures of the nationalities policy to have any effect'.²²⁴

As Barker notes,

It criticized the state bodies for working in an uncoordinated fashion and doing nothing to counter growing pessimism amongst Sorbs who had to a large extent accepted the social changes that industrialization and collectivisation had brought about at the workplace and in the villages.²²⁵

But, functionaries like Jurisch from the ASR criticised the Domowina for interfering in the educational system by demanding reports from local state bodies on specific

²²³ Ibid. pp. 100-101.

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 101.

²²⁵ Ibid.

aspects on the nationalities policy.²²⁶ Jurisch also held the SED view that there should be no compulsion for parents to force Sorbs to use the Sorbian language or to send children into Sorbian classes. In brief, the overall aim of the Domowina was to introduce a new law relating to Sorbian questions, but the SED did agree as it felt that sufficient legislation was already in place.²²⁷

As the 1970s progressed there was a cyclical pattern of claim followed by a counterclaim, or criticism followed by a response between the SED and the Domowina along similar lines noted above. For instance, state bodies objected to the Domowina's attempts to organise youth activities, rivalling those of the Communist youth movement, the FDJ.²²⁸ Another objection came from the deputy Minister of the Interior, Ernst Marterer, who objected to the use of the term *sozialistische Lebensweise der Sorben* (socialist way of life of the Sorbs), and claimed there was no such concept.²²⁹

The Domowina and other Sorbs continued to be criticised for the tendency of separate development, an unwillingness to work together with Germans, while the Sorbs continued to be concerned about the erosion of their language. Jurij Brězan led a committee of one of the groups of the Domowina produced a counter-draft which put more emphasis on the role of *language*, rather than general political tasks.²³⁰ (Emphasis added). In public, the Domowina had no choice but to support the SED line. This situation continued through to the end of the SED in 1989, but in the

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid. p. 102.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid. p. 103.

meantime, the SED had no interest to change the nationalities policy, and because of 'the Domowina's subordinate position in the state hierarchy meant that it could only have a minimal effect on the execution of that policy, and had no chance of changing it'.²³¹

In brief, some of the developments that took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s include the Domowina's attempt to involve local groups more closely in the administration of Sorbian schools in 1979, and letters of protest to the *Nowa doba* when there was a 'bilingual performance in Bautzen of the traditional Upper Sorbian custom 'Ptači kwas' (Bird's wedding) aimed at attracting both Germans and Sorbs to the performances'.²³² Many Sorbs protested about the casting of the 'braška' (matchmaker), as the person who played the part was a 'German actor from Berlin and read texts in German'.²³³

One further point that needs to be mentioned is that the Catholic Church renewed its efforts to undermine the Domowina and the nationalities policy, claimed that the renewal of Sorb ethnic base could only be achieved by the Catholic Church.²³⁴ Given the role of the Catholic Church in Poland in culminating in martial law in 1981, the SED was feeling anxious about such developments.

However, the early 1980s saw the first extensions of Sorbian institutions since the late 1950s. For instance, in 1980 a Sorbian film group was formed and attached to DEFA, the GDR film organisation, as well as language commissions for Upper and Lower

²³¹ Ibid. pp.103-104.

²³² Ibid. p.104.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

Sorbian.²³⁵ Moreover, the language commissions updated the terminology, and in 1979, Sorbian institutions were given formal status in the Academy of Sciences.²³⁶ Perhaps by 1982, enough momentum had gathered to begin the process of democratisation in Eastern Europe. In other words, it can be argued that the consciousness of the people was raised in a background of political changes initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev. But, the SED refused to adapt any of the democratising state structures and policies (glasnost, perestroika).

Once again, Jurij Grós, First Secretary of the Domowina from 1964 who had previously spoken with fork tongue about nationalities policy, on this occasion reported that approximately 78 per cent of Domowina members had a good command of their language, while conceding that *language competence* could not be the only criterion for a Sorbian *national identity*'.²³⁷ (Emphases added). But others like Jurisch maintained their suspicion of Sorbian identity, urging vigilance over the young people and the intelligentsia.²³⁸

4. 24 The mid- 1980s

4.24.1 The Domowina and the Churches

It has been previously noted that the Church and its connection with the Sorbian language dates back to 1548, and there is some truth in the claim that the Churches in Lusatia did play a role in the maintenance of the Sorbian language. However, as also noted previously, the Churches undermined the role of the Domowina, which although at one level appeared to be an instrument for the SED's 'socialist

²³⁵ Ibid. p. 105.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

development' policy, it should also be recognised that the Domowina's *raison d'être* since its inception, was to preserve, transmit and 'administer' Sorbian affairs in Lusatia.

In March 1987, at the Eleventh Federal Congress Grós gave a speech, which was much the same as in 1982, or in other words, the issues experienced by the key protagonists (the state, the Domowina, the Churches and the Sorb population) seem to follow a cyclical pattern and with no clear resolution. Grós's speeches and input appear to be a rehearsed script of platitudes, or rhetoric. But later in 1987, when the Domowina celebrated its 75th anniversary in October, it made some attempts to improve relations with the Churches.²³⁹ Furthermore, it was recognised for its services at a reception hosted in Berlin by Honecker, and awarded 'The Grand Star of International Friendship'.²⁴⁰ Although several clergy were invited, they declined but at the same time they were 'allowed to publish an uncensored evaluation of the 75th anniversary in *Nowa boda*'.²⁴¹

The distinction between the Churches and the Domowina was made by the director of the Institute for Sorbian Ethnic Research, Měrcin Kasper, in a report on relations between Sorbs and the Churches to Klaus Sorgenicht.²⁴² In brief, a dialogue was sought between the Domowina and the Churches (both denominations), which began after the Eleventh Congress in 1987, between the Catholic Cyrill-Methodius Association and the leadership of the Protestant Church.²⁴³ Rudolf Kilank, chairman

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid. p. 106.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid

of the Association, in effect made an interesting assessment of the dialogue that took place and summed up the situation by referring to the point that the ideological positions of the Domowina and the Catholic Church were different and this needed to be recognised.²⁴⁴

At the same however, Kilank argued that there was no reason why the Domowina could not represent Christians, and praised its efforts for the introduction of religious broadcasts in Sorbian.²⁴⁵ In any event, the SED and the Domowina differed in their evaluations of the dialogue between the Churches and the Domowina. However, Stasi reports according to Barker's study seem to clearly indicate that the Catholic Church was calling on 'the Domowina to renounce its status as a socialist organisation and to withdraw from its subordinate role to the SED demands, which were totally unacceptable to the SED'.²⁴⁶

4.25. Continuing problems

It is safe to say that throughout the 1980s, the problems in implementing the nationalities policy had become familiar and repetitive. In other words, among the other issues thus far, the Domowina complained about the lack of coordination with local authorities and complained about the shortage of properly trained teachers in Sorbian, while the SED dismissed these concerns by regarding them as an exaggeration of the importance of Sorbian interests.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 107.

According to Barker, 'the most significant failure of the nationalities policy was however to be seen in the state of the bilingual schools, especially the B-schools'.²⁴⁸ Since the 1968 legislation, the Domowina constantly tried to bring about improvements in the implementation of educational policy. Again, the problem of accurate statistics arises in this analysis. From the low point of the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, the numbers of pupils taking Sorbian had risen steadily, but then declined before rising again from 1981 onwards, with the biggest increases after 1985.²⁴⁹ Remaining with Barker's study, the numbers in A-schools remained comparatively stable over the 1970s and 1980s, around 1,500, but the main fluctuations were in the numbers in the B-schools, where estimates of about 15,000 Sorbian pupils were made by Grós's personal adviser, Heinz Zuschke.²⁵⁰ As it happened,

... in reality there only about 6,000 pupils receiving tuition in Sorbian, but of these about 1,000 were of German nationality, and at least 1,000 pupils only took Sorbian for a few years, sometimes only to classes 4 or 6. This was in particular the situation in the Niesky district and parts of Lower Lusatia.²⁵¹

Moreover, the language competence, the levels of attainment and in some case the quality of teaching were poor. Zuschke calculated that only a third of pupils reached the required standard for each year, and these were mostly A-pupils or B-pupils who already had some competence from home. A number of pupils had great difficulty in formulating written sentences or conducting simple conversation in Sorbian. Ironically, when the deputy Minister of Education received a copy of the analysis, he reprimanded the Domowina for 'interfering in matters in which they had no powers or

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 108.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

competence'.²⁵² Yet, the Domowina recommended and requested adequate teaching materials, textbooks, teachers, teacher training, improvements in the Sorbian education curriculum, and effective implementation of the nationalities policy, to mention just a few, in order to prevent erosion of the Sorbian language. There appears to be little or no evidence of the Domowina and the Sorb population demanding a separate state in the GDR. Certainly, nationalistic tendencies existed, but this does not equate to an armed uprising, or at the extreme position, a small ethnic group-challenging Moscow's might. The Domowina tried to fulfil its cultural role in an environment in which the SED, the Party, was indeed the state.

4.26 Glasnost (openness)

Commentators such as Trudla Malinkowa published a series of articles in the *Nowa doba* in May and June 1988, concerning the process of assimilation. She viewed that 'assimilation was a part of the dialectical process'.²⁵³ Sieghard Kozel rejected her view in his letters to the *Nowa doba*, and stressed the 'importance of organizational independence of Sorbian institutions', and criticised the Domowina's expenditure 'cheap and folkloristic activities' as well as describing 'assimilation as a negative development'.²⁵⁴

By this stage the long standing discontent among the Domowina's established members began to come out in the open. For instance, an article published by Jan Malink in *Nowa doba*, expressed the view how Pawoł Nedo, a former chairman of the Domowina would have had a premature death had he stayed 'to bear the stupidities of

²⁵² Ibid. p. 109.

²⁵³ Ibid. p. 110.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

the policy which was imposed from above in the 1950s'.²⁵⁵ The SED became alarmed by 'the open expression of such views', and summoned Kozel to Berlin where he argued that these points of view had been allowed in order to attract public debate.²⁵⁶ Moreover, Grós reported on a meeting of the SED group of the Domowina of whom Měrcin Kasper demanded 'a new approach to solving problems which required greater *openess*'.²⁵⁷ (Emphasis added).

The influence of Gorbachev's reforming ideas expressed in *glasnost* became more apparent in the publication of *Serbski student*, a student journal at Technical University in Dresden, wanting 'more critical debate' in the beginning of 1988.²⁵⁸ In October 1988, the Domowina leadership tried to take over and publish it as a journal of the university association of the Domowina.²⁵⁹ In brief, the students illegally produced the journal using the Domowina's facilities, and continued to do so when Grós was forced to confront the editors, saying he was in favour of open discussion, but the Domowina 'would not allow attacks on the state, on the leadership of the SED, on the Domowina and socialism itself'.²⁶⁰ It became apparent that the students were not going to relent, claiming that the *Nowa doba* did not provide a forum for open discussion and in a further edition of *Serbski student* on 31 December 1988, it contained a report of the meeting with Grós.²⁶¹

The above illustration showed the first cracks in the monopolistic control of censorship by the GDR, and also the first indications of the SED's loss of control. As

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 110-111.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 111.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid. pp. 111-112.

a result, Grós reported on a number of Sorbian groups and writers, whom he considered were trying to undermine the SED's monopoly of public discussion, in particular the poet Benedikt Dyrlich, and social commentator Jurij Koch, who had been critical of the GDR's energy policy in Lusatia and Tomasz Nawka.²⁶²

4.27 The end of the SED

Throughout 1989, the Domowina was subject to the same pressures as any state institution in the GDR. In other words, it was 'aware of the deficiencies of government and SED policy at all levels', but in its reports to the upper levels of the state apparatus, it could only express criticism 'in a muted fashion'.²⁶³ State bodies and the SED leadership came under more criticism, but they shut themselves off from such criticism. For instance, as late as July 1989, Sorgenicht sent a report to Egon Krenz on the Seventh Festival of Sorbian Culture in June and stated nothing but 'the great successes of the nationalities policy'.²⁶⁴ It should be apparent by now, that the government at least at a micro-level was in denial. Even so, despite increased criticism from individual Domowina groups, giving contrasting reports, such as the criticism, especially of the *Schönfärberei* (embellishment) of the nationalities policy, 'the Domowina leadership followed the SED line until the end of September'.²⁶⁵ Interestingly, the executive committee of the Domowina expressed no criticisms to the ASR, until after the resignation of Honecker on 18 October.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Ibid. p. 112

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 113.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

Certainly, some Domowina functionaries, such as Jurij Handrik, knew that the nationalities policy

... had operated at a formal, superficial level, particularly in the bilingual schools, and he reported on sustained attacks on the Domowina from a number of groups, Catholics, intellectuals and students, who were demanding the removal of the SED members from the leadership of the Domowina and an end to centralized SED control of policy.²⁶⁷

The events that followed happened quickly. The Domowina sent an *open* report to Berlin as preparations for the next SED Party Conference in 1990, which did occur. The report mentioned briefly some successes as well its failures, but perhaps more importantly, it made 'the assessment that the Sorbian language and culture was in absolute danger of dying out'.²⁶⁸ This was the last contact with the ASR, as on 9 November the Berlin Wall was opened; a new government under reformist Hans Modrow took over on 13 November, and on 1 December the SED gave up its absolute control of the political system.

Yet, it should be noted here, that despite the SED's monopoly of power meant that the Domowina's role was to facilitate and transmit the SED ideology among the Sorbian people, this had been challenged by the only Sorbian institutions outside the control of the SED, namely, the Churches.

Moreover, as Barker concludes

Over a period of ten years, the membership of the Domowina had risen by over two thousand. This can only be attributed to the fact that although it had assumed a political role, the Domowina was

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p.113.

one of the main organizers of cultural events, and individual groups tended to handle the political questions in a purely perfunctory fashion concentrating on the cultural elements.²⁶⁹

4.28 Some other considerations on the fall of the GDR regime

The above discussion has focussed in part on the demise of GDR at a micro-level in terms of governance. A brief discussion of the broader context or the macro-level of this period at least, is warranted here. Certainly, as noted above, the events of the latter period took place in the context of protest and embryonic reform in neighbouring Poland at the beginning of the 1980s decade.

Nevertheless, if one examines the economic policy and structure of the GDR, when Honecker became its leader, he said that despite a 6.1% increase in output in the first six months of 1971, there were still “anomalies” and “a number of negative factors” in the economy.²⁷⁰ It can be argued here, that these anomalies and negative factors persisted throughout the remainder of the GDR’s existence. Perhaps the successes of the GDR’s economy belong to the period before 1971. For instance, according to Radcliffe, in 1970, his assessment was that by 1966, East Germany ‘had climbed to the position of fifth largest producing country in Europe (following Russia, West Germany, Britain and France), and stood level with Italy as a trading nation’.²⁷¹

Although the above assessment may be impressive, but by 1978 as Crossland notes, ‘East Germany was finding it more and more difficult to finance urgently needed

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 114.

²⁷⁰ Cited by Schattmann, S.E., “German Democratic Republic”, in *Britannica Book of the Year 1972*, op.cit p. 332.

²⁷¹ Radcliffe, S., *25 Years On: The two Germanies 1970*, (London: George G. Harrap and Co, 1972), p. 160.

Western imports'.²⁷² It was trying to increase its productivity beyond the limit at the same time when the Soviet Union's foreign debt continued to mount. Moreover, it can be said the extent of the Cold War escalated or fluctuated, particularly in the context of an "arms race", which put an added strain on the Soviet economy in terms of military expenditure. At the same time, East Germany supplied considerable quantities of equipment, arms, ammunition and personnel to Zaire, and lesser contributions to Yemen and Ethiopia.²⁷³

The point here is, economic 'anomalies' on a macro-level in the political economy such as the GDR, filtered down to the micro-level of the state, which included the anomalies found in the language and nationalities policy regarding the Sorbs. In broad terms, the socialist development of the GDR impacted on the implementation of the nationalities policy, as part of the education system, specific to the Sorbs of Lusatia. In brief, the malaise of the state was also the malaise of its citizens, both East Germans and Sorbs alike, in that this type of arrangement precluded individuals from reaching their fullest potential.

Perhaps one last consideration, but a theoretical one, needs to be mentioned here. It seems that in spite of the nationalities policy, there was a change in the way East German subjects were considered by the state. According to Fulbrook, after the

²⁷² Crossland, N., "German Democratic Republic", in *1979 Britannica Book of the Year*, (events of 1978), (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc, 1979), p. 402.

²⁷³ Ibid. pp. 401-402. During the leadership of the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev, the percentage of its gross national expenditure on defence reached remarkable levels. The price of Russian foreign policy can be quantified: if a misguided orientation to the armament industry were to reduce the long-term growth rate of Russian national product from an achievable 3 per cent to 1 per cent then the GDP, which amounted to US-\$ 600 billion in 1996 (in 1993 prices), would not increase over a period of ten years by 34 percent to US-\$ 800 billion, but only by 10 per cent. Working on the basis of a GDP figure of US-\$ 600 billion, for the year 1996, the accumulated difference over the ten-year period amounts to US-\$ 745 billion (in 1993 prices), that is, Russia would sacrifice an average annual amount of national product in this reference period.
<<http://defencejournal.com/april98/russiansecurity2.htm>>
Sighted 11 July 2004.

constitutional changes in 1974, Honecker himself could not 'clarify the official line when he reiterated the new theoretical distinction between 'citizenship of the GDR', and 'German nationality'. According to Honecker,

This distinction is decisive. Our socialist state is called German Democratic Republic, because the vast majority of its citizens are, by nationality, German. There is therefore absolutely no reason for any confusion when filling up forms. The answer to this sort of question runs quite simply, and without any ambiguity: citizenship — GDR, nationality — German. That's the way it is.²⁷⁴

It should be apparent, that the above declaration implied that the Sorbs were viewed as 'citizens', rather than an ethnic minority group with a distinctive nationality. Certain, officially the Sorb community was treated in some respects as a separate 'nation', the regime 'tended to undermine the conditions for the continuation of a viable Sorb community'.²⁷⁵

4.29 Conclusion

As a response to the opening quotation by Hitler at the beginning of the chapter, post war European emigration demonstrated, or still demonstrates the adaptability of individuals to settle in a new land and learn a second language (usually the host nation's). There is no need to ponder for too long over the quote, but in a sense there is a lot to be learnt from Hitler's viewpoint, not only for historical, social, and political reasons, but also, does the inner nature of human beings remain unchanged? As the term 'inner nature' is vague and open-ended, one can take some liberty here and refer to this 'inner nature' as 'an identity', which may or may not contain a *linguistic identity*. In other words, the mother tongue, which can belong to a

²⁷⁴ Fulbrook, M., German National Identity after the Holocaust, op.cit. p. 196.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

motherland or a fatherland, and can be intrinsically a national homeland with a constructed persona.

This chapter began from a theoretical perspective in an attempt to provide an explanation of a national 'character' (German and several Slavonic nationalities) in relation to the language of that nationality. For this study, it is not particularly useful to be distracted by stereotypical accounts of national or collective characteristics such as business acumen and the like.

Although Radosavljević's study, *Who Are The Slavs* is flawed, especially where he refers to one of the Slavonic characteristic traits 'of Slavonic mentality is Love for the Truth', it may be useful to note that he argues, 'many German authors... claim that the Slav is inferior culturally to other people'. In other words, it is an early insight into the concept of cultural chauvinism, which no matter how oblique, it is an undercurrent or a theme that runs parallel to the subject of this chapter and elsewhere in this thesis.

By using a historical approach (or method) in the above study, it identifies a relationship between a nation's language, and consequently its literature, and its history. For the purpose of convenience, it so happens that the Romantic period and/or Romanticism usually refers to the eighteenth-century when new conceptions of art and artistic creation arose from a revolt against neo-classicist aesthetics, or the culture of perfection. However, there is no arbitrary time frame in order to determine whether or not a piece of work belongs to the Romantic period, or whether its ideology is considered Romantic in one culture and not in another. In other words, what is

understood by Romanticism also differs from country to country, which can include a variety of political ideologies or contexts. In brief,

Romanticism can also be defined as an artistic and intellectual movement that originated in the late eighteenth century and stressed emotion, imagination... and rebellion against social conventions.²⁷⁶

Thus it is possible to establish some coherence to such expressions as 'German Romanticism', 'Polish Romanticism', 'Czech Romanticism', and 'Sorbian Romanticism'. Distinctions were made in Germany as early as 1800 in that at the beginning, Romanticism was characterised by an outspoken commitment to philosophy, which has a basic connection with its universal character. But, despite Romanticism in Germany being connected with nature, history, literature and science, it 'became virtually synonymous with reactionary policies of the Metternich era'.²⁷⁷ Moreover, Romanticism made an impact on political doctrines and thinking in that it was closely connected with nationalism and patriotism. At the same time however, Romanticism has a theoretical ambiguity and duality in that one of its proponents, Friedrich Schlegel, envisaged the future development of Europe as a separation or combination of nationalism or cosmopolitanism.²⁷⁸

However, the distinction that was made in this study was that while German Romanticism had encyclopaedic and universal qualities, Polish Romanticism for

²⁷⁶ "Romanticism", (author not cited),
< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism#Art_and_Literature >.
Sighted 11 July 2003, op.cit.

²⁷⁷ Vögel, U., in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, op. cit. p.453.

²⁷⁸ Engelhardt, D., in *Romanticism in National Context*, op.cit. p. 117.

instance, particularly literature and music found in Mickiewicz and Chopin respectively, was a protest against foreign occupation.

Sorbian Romanticism, especially in the nineteenth century was influenced, in part at least by Pan-Slavism, which awakened an awareness of a Sorbian national identity, or a national consciousness. Sorbian poets such as Handrij Zejler and Jakub Bart-Cisinski influenced Sorbian identity, as well as contributing to Sorbian literary development. In brief, the study in this chapter distinguished between German and Slavonic Romanticism, in that the theme in the latter instance is accentuated by their political and historical perspectives, and highlighted by oppression in the respective homelands. Thus, in general terms it was argued that some Romantic literary figures have been viewed as paternal or patriarchal individuals who have influenced national identity, national consciousness (or a collective psyche), as well as institutionalising the national language in a literary form. Moreover, it was argued that the above phenomena have been significant in the evolution of a national character and its language.

Having made some theoretical bases, this study surveyed the realisation of a divided Germany after its defeat in 1945. In simple terms, they have been referred to as East and West Germany, or the GDR and FRG respectively. At first, the allied Declaration on Liberated Peoples of 1945 envisaged free elections in all parts of Europe, but by Russia wanting governments favourable to her, created the 'Eastern Bloc', making East Germany a Marxist-Leninist state, with the SED having the monopoly on the control of the state, the GDR.

Initially, the Soviet Union supported the development of Sorbian culture and language and it seemed as if the Sorbs had made good progress under the first constitution of the GDR in 1949. On the surface, it seemed to be a manifestation of Marxist internationalism, as well as a process to overcome the legacy of the Nazi period. But at the Second Party Conference the SED announced its programme for the socialist transformation of the GDR, which later included industrialisation and collectivisation. Moreover, the SED hierarchy rejected any idea of special treatment of the Sorbs, and in 1950 accused Sorbian leaders as being chauvinistic and nationalistic.

Sorbian delegations, including the leadership of the Domowina approached SED local officials between November 1947 and October 1951, in an attempt to gain cultural autonomy. In brief, the Domowina and other political and social organisations were reorganised along GDR or Marxist-Leninist lines. Over time, it became increasingly evident that the Sorbs had paid a high political price, in order to maintain their cultural and linguistic institutions.

As dissident activity surfaced, such as the show trial that culminated in Czechoslovakia in 1952, the uprisings in Berlin and Poznań in 1953, the SED became more anxious and suspicious of Sorbian activities. As it happened, a bilingual school system was established in Lusatia in 1951. However, before continuing further, it cannot be emphasised enough, the indebtedness this chapter (and elsewhere) has to the scholarship of Barker. By following Barker's work rather closely, this study revealed the problems associated with the bilingual school system. In brief, the system experienced shortages of materials, trained teachers in Sorbian, as well as objections from parents who did not want to enforce Sorbian classes onto their children,

especially in the B-schools. At the same time, the leaders of the Domowina were constantly accused of putting Sorbian interests above SED policy. In brief, the institutionalisation of Sorbian culture meant that it became subject to the dictates of SED policy.

As noted above, 'Sorbian cultural autonomy' came at a high political price, which was further evidenced by the destruction of Sorbian villages, in particular in Horno, in the interests of the GDR's economic (industrialisation) and energy policy (opencast lignite mining). This in turn exacerbated the process of assimilation, as thousands of Sorbs were relocated in city apartment blocks. Put another way, the above was a form of accelerated germanisation. Sorbian intellectuals became more frustrated with the effects of the SED's policy on the ethnic base of the Sorbs.

Although Article 39 of the 1968 Constitution of the GDR stated that 'Citizens... of Sorb nationality have the right to cultivate their mother tongue and culture', it became evident up until 1989, when communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, that this was not the practice under the nationalities policy. Sorb repression, together with contradictions in the language policy, escalated administrative conflict between the Domowina and state bureaucracies, which witnessed divisions within the Sorbian groups. One direct result of the above was that, the *status* of the Sorbian language eroded. It became clear that the Sorbian language was dying.

Not only were there divisions within the Domowina, but also some sections of the Sorbian population and the Catholic Church viewed the Domowina as an instrument of SED policy and ideology. The Catholic Church argued that this would undermine

the survival of the Sorbian language, and that it was the only institution that offered any hope of a Sorbian revival. In the meantime, the SED accused the Domowina of undermining its nationalities policy. In brief, the antagonisms between the SED and the Domowina showed a cyclical and repetitive pattern. On the one hand the Domowina persistently stated the deficiencies in the implementation of the SED's policy at a number of state forums. On the other hand the SED and other state bodies claimed the successes of the language and nationalities policy.

Dissident activity took place in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and it gained momentum in Poland in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Mikhail Gorbachev's concept of *glasnost* and *perestroika* made a profound effect on the developments in Eastern Europe (and the other Soviet Bloc countries). No doubt this raised the SED's anxieties about an increase in the call for open debate and criticism by Sorbian students and Sorbian intelligentsia, especially in the late 1980s. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 also marked the end of the SED.

Although there were fluctuations in the number of pupils in Sorbian schools over the decades of the existence of the GDR, accompanied by a significant increase after 1985, the assessment of the bilingual education system showed a disappointing record. It can be said here that the regime could not support its policies at a macro-level, as well as the micro-level. Thus, at the end of 1989, the Sorbs in the GDR had not experienced equality as citizens, and neither was their language protected or safeguarded by the state, despite constitutional ideals.